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THE

Cliston Cales and Narratives.



VOLUME II.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The publication of these Tales is for several reasons suspended for the present; but should the two volumes now completed meet with as extended a sale as the encouragement the Editors have already received warrants them to expect, they hope to be able to continue the series on a future occasion.

LITTLE MALVERN,

Friday within the Octave of the Assumption of B.V.M. 1854.

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WINIFRIDE JONES,

The very Ignorant Girl.



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WINIFRIDE JONES.

The bery Ignorant Girl.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSULTATION.

MUST part with Winifride," said Mrs. Barnard, with that kind of determination in the tone which argues a certain want of determination; "I must: what do you think, Aldridge? you say nothing. I thought you told me

vourself she would never answer?"

"Well, ma'am," replied Mrs. Aldridge, the cook, and responsible person in Mrs. Barnard's household, inspecting the corner of her apron while she answered, a frequent gesture with her when in a respectful embarrassment what to reply to her superiors; "I did say so, I know; she is certainly not the sort of servant you require, and I doubt if she ever will be. There is no smartness nor handiness about her, but-"

"But what?" inquired Mrs. Barnard, who, having made up her mind, as she thought, to part with Winifride, was annoyed at finding her prime minister still regarded it as a matter for consideration.

"Why, really, ma'am, she is a good girl and takes pains. If she was not so slow and dull, I should hope to make something of her."

"But I thought you told me," resumed the

lady, "that she broke so many things."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the cook, "she was very unfortunate at first, and she is still awkward enough; but I must say she always comes and tells of herself, even if she's aware of only having chipped or cracked any thing."

"That's all very right," said Mrs. Barnard; but you know, Aldridge, that does not pay for the broken things; and then you did tell me, I re-

member, that she was sulky."

Mrs. Aldridge paused awhile, and then answered, "I can't say, ma'am, as I have observed any thing of the kind lately, nothing but what has been very proper in her manner; indeed, I might say, if it's not wrong to say so, I could wish she was better or worse, that one might, as it were, make up one's mind what to do."

Mrs. Aldridge knew very well that it is wrong to wish that others should commit faults that we may feel justified in some course we are desirous of taking. Mrs. Barnard sighed and looked bothered.

"Don't part with Winifride," interposed her sick daughter, raising her delicate head from the cushion of the sofa on which she rested, and laying down her book; "Don't part with Winifride, mama." Mrs. Leslie, the dear and only daughter of Mrs. Barnard, who had returned from India for the recovery of her health, was naturally a powerful pleader with her fond mother.

"Why, dear Louisa?" inquired Mrs. Barnard,

as her features relaxed into a tender smile.

"Because Winifride is a poor girl, and she told me, when I asked her, that she had no relations, they were all dead."

"But it would be too hard to be saddled with a stupid girl because she has no friends; still I am sorry for her: dear me! I wish we had never taken her. I wish we had known how awkward and ignorant she was before we engaged her. Why, you told me yourself, Louisa, when you so kindly tried to teach her to read, that she was quite incapable of learning, and that she did not seem to know even the principal articles of the faith. It is a shame for a Catholic to have been brought up like that."

"Certainly," replied Louisa, "when I had Margaret and her up here the other day, I found that Winifride did not know the Catechism; and though she blundered through the Creed in a fashion, yet when I came to ask her the meaning, she could not

tell me. Margaret answered quite glib."

"Yes, Margaret is quite a different girl," said Mrs. Barnard.

"I can't but say, however, that Winifride is more anxious always to go to Mass and to be in time there than Margaret is," observed Mrs. Aldridge.

"But what is the good," said Mrs. Barnard, a little impatiently, "if she don't know the least what it is all about?" "Oh, don't say so, dear mama," exclaimed Mrs. Leslie, as a faint blush spread over her marble face; "there is good surely in wishing to please God, however ignorantly it may be done."

"My mistress, I am sure," said Mrs. Aldridge, coming to Mrs. Barnard's assistance, "values peo-

ple who do their duty and keep God's commandments; only, as I understand her to mean, if they know nothing about God, they can't be much thinking of Him in what they do."

"Exactly so, Aldridge," replied her mistress; and then added, after thinking a minute, "I suppose, then, we must give this ignoramus a further trial, as Mrs. Leslie wishes it."

"I only ask you, mama," said Louisa, gently, "to keep her till you can hear of another place for her, since she is so friendless."

This compromise seemed to give tolerable satisfaction to all parties, and was agreed upon at once. Mrs. Aldridge, therefore, took her leave, and descended to the sphere of her duties with considerable self-satisfaction at having conquered her repugnance to the stupid Winifride, and actually pleaded for her stay, while most anxious for her departure; neither is she to be denied the merit. of a good action, because it was done rather drily. and accompanied with a strong dose of self-complacency. The motive was a good one; she conceived it to be her duty as a Christian. Mrs. Barnard was pleased at having pleased her daughter; and Louisa was pleased because her compassionate heart was glad for poor Winifride's sake.



CHAPTER II.

THE BARNARDS AND THEIR HOUSEHOLD.



Rs. BARNARD was the wife of a thriving solicitor in the little rural town of Southwell. The solid and comfortable-looking red brick house situated on its skirts, just where a few formal detached

dwellings remind you that you have not yet got clear into the country, or announce your approach to a small town of some pretensions, if your head is turned the opposite way; the neat grass-plot, with its trim laurels and yew-trees separating it by a narrow slip from the dust of the high road; while a glimpse through a trellis-door at one angle of the house revealed a constellation of variously shaped flower-beds, the garden degenerating or rising in the unseen distance from the ornamental to the useful; all, in short, from the large and bright brass knocker to the carefully rolled gravel-walk, gave token, by its spruce and well-kept appearance, of the easy, if not affluent, circumstances of its owner.

Mr. Barnard was a plodding and industrious man, who considered it his vocation to make money in a respectable calling. His notions of duty and interest were united in happy harmony; for he considered honesty as the best policy, and uprightness a duty as much as indefatigable attention to business. Of all the injunctions given to man by his Creator, he seemed to have most present to his mind the command to labour, "In the sweat of the brow thou shalt eat bread;" and it must be conf. seed that he appeared to regard it as a privilege rather than a penalty. With taste and conscience thus comfortably blended together, no one, perhaps, laid his head on his pillow after a toilsome day with more placid self-satisfaction than the gentleman in question. He considered himself at peace with God, with his neighbour, and with himself. Mr. Barnard had, in fact, no conception of the true meaning of the word sin. He did not possess the idea. It was represented in his mind by that of crime, which he perfectly understood. That was a gross offence against society cognisable by the law. Minor faults were regarded by him from the same point of view; they were offences against the society, community, or family of which we form a part, and as such reprehensible. Men, in short, were regarded by him, not as beings made for God and responsible to Him, but as made for each other and for the world in which they lived, and to which they were accountable for the discharge of their relative duties; while God was, so to say, a great overseer. to preside over the due performance of all these social duties, and to set straight, in a future life, the unequal retribution sometimes awarded in the present.

Mr. Barnard was a Protestant, but had married

a Catholic wife, with whose religion, however, he never interfered; neither had he hindered her from bringing up their only child in the Catholic faith. Girls, he said, had best be of their mother's religion. Mrs. Barnard had even enjoyed the privilege of having Catholics for her servants—a power she perhaps might not have cared much to avail herself of, but for Mrs. Aldridge, who had lived many years with her, and was much valued and trusted, as well as consulted on all household matters; for Mrs. Aldridge, being a much more devout Catholic than her mistress, made a point of this matter, to which Mrs. Barnard had, of course, no

objection at any rate.

And yet, though the whole family was Catholic, with one exception, it bore no resemblance to a Catholic household. The ways, the manners, the customs, were all Protestant,—the atmosphere was Protestant. This can be readily accounted for; first, by the fact that the one Protestant exception was the most important by far, being the master of the house, the head of the family, the only person who can give the tone with any authority to the family circle; and next, because Mrs. Barnard herself was not one to make any amends for this deficiency. Poor Mrs. Barnard! she was an unhappy sort of Catholic. The habit of five-and-twenty years standing lay upon her of considering her religion as matter of apology, a thing to be kept out of sight, and separate from daily life. Her faith, it is true, she had not lost, neither had she abandoned her religious duties. She went to communion on great festivals, and to confession whenever she went to communion. She

desired not to offend God by mortal sin. She wished to keep the commandments; the counsels were for religious, of course; her special duty besides was to make her religion as little as possible distasteful to her husband, and she felt instinctively that any high principles or practice would cer-tainly prove so. Any thing like advance in the spiritual life was, therefore, never aimed at by her. She contented herself with resolving to avoid sin. Unfortunately her married life had been spent where spiritual helps did not abound. The mission was at all times a very poor one, and of late years, from the removal of a few Catholic families who had helped to support it, it had been given up. There had been, consequently, no resident priest; Mass on days of obligation being said by a priest who served a mission some miles off, and who had permission to duplicate. Great and sad as was this loss, it was sadder still that Mrs. Barnard did not feel it.

Louisa Leslie was much more pious than her mother. Naturally better disposed, she had married a good Catholic, which had been the means of repairing in a great measure her defective religious education; and now illness had come to chastise and soften her heart, and draw her nearer to God. She suspected that she was not long for this world; something within seemed to tell her so, though physicians spoke of prospects of renewed health after a persevering use of tonics and prolonged residence in a cooler climate. She was desirous of employing well the time that remained, of making a generous sacrifice of her earthly affections, of her husband and her child, to God,

whenever He should please to demand it; but she felt a difficulty in making it while she could still entertain some hopes that it might not be required. Perhaps love was wanting. Perhaps she loved the comforts of religion more than she loved God. Something was wanting, at any rate; she felt it herself; but there was no one whom she could consult, or to whom she could turn.

Too unwell, besides, to go to Mass or confession, she did not venture to alarm her mother, who would have regarded it in the light of an apprehension of death, by asking her to send for the priest on the occasional days when he came over to hear confessions. She must wait for some special season to come round, under pain of rousing a state of mind in Mrs. Barnard which she felt too nervous to encounter; and so she dragged on her gentle and sad existence, doing whatever little charitable work fell in her way, and trying to bear with patience the weight of her bodily sufferings.

Mrs. Aldridge was, as we have said, a strict and good Catholic. She examined her conscience with diligence, and kept a watch over herself. She carefully noted, that she might confess, all that her memory reproached her with. Perhaps her mind was too exclusively absorbed in this occupation to give attention to advancing in the love of God. However this might be, the Mrs. Aldridge of ten years back was very like the Mrs. Aldridge of the present day. There were the same virtues, the same faults, the same self-accusation, the same general desire of amendment. Her religion wanted sweetness, perfume, unction.

What shall I say? Instead of God being simply regarded and loved, a certain character was loved and aimed at, inward as well as outward. Mrs. Aldridge, in fine, desired to be an excellent Catholic; but the truth must be told, the love of Jesus and Mary was deficient—not wanting altogether, or she had not been a Catholic at all, but deficient.

The rest of the household consisted of the aforementioned Margaret, a fine tall girl, with bright, unintelligent black eyes, rather too tond of looking out at windows, and dressing above her situation in life, which was that of parlour-maid and housemaid to half the house; the upper floor and washing the dishes constituting poor Winifride's department, of whom we shall say nothing, but allow her, for the present, to display her own character; while some very multifarious offices were filled by the man-servant John. He looked after Mr. Barnard's horse, kept the garden neat, waited at table when there was company, blacked shoes, &c., and spent whatever available time remained in paying attentions to Margaret. He was a good sort of well-disposed man in the main, but had lately become rather infrequent at confession, first from lack of opportunity, his occupations for Mr. Barnard interfering with it often, and subsequently from a slothful disinclination which had crept upon him, and which had greatly increased with his admiration for the careless Margaret.

These individuals, with the Protestant nurse of Mrs. Leslie's little boy, constituted the household of Mr. Barnard's red-brick mansion, facing the road as aforesaid—a matter of much regret to Mrs. Barnard, who disliked dust, and thought retirement would have been more *genteel*, and of much satisfaction to the owner of the unintelligent black eyes, who liked to see the coach passing, and liked perhaps the chance of being seen herself.





CHAPTER III.

THE EXAMINATION.

t is a shame for a Catholic to have been brought up like that," said Mrs. Leslie to herself, repeating her mother's words; "but if so," she continued, mentally, "it would be a shame for Catholics who can

repair the mischief not to endeavour to do so. must really try and teach this poor creature something. If I have advantages which she has not, I ought charitably to impart what I can to supply her miserable need. I will this very day do my best to discover whether she really knows any thing of her religion, and then I shall understand where to begin;" and so Mrs. Leslie proceeded to put her resolution into practice. Though unusually tired. and obliged to retire to bed before her customary hour, she did not allow this to furnish her with an excuse for delay, but called Winifride to brush her hair and help her to undress, instead of Margaret, her usual attendant when the nurse was engaged. This was in itself a little sacrifice to the sickly and sensitive Mrs. Leslie, as Winifride was undoubtedly a clumsy handmaid.

After a few common remarks, and when Mrs. Leslie, attired in her dressing gown, had resigned herself languidly to her arm-chair and Winifride's hands, her long fair hair hanging over the back of the chair, and Winifride standing, comb in hand, the picture of awkwardness (having never undertaken such an office for a lady before), she proceeded to break the ice by asking her attendant if she had ever been at school.

"Please, ma'am, what did you say?" replied the girl, as she passed the comb resolutely through Mrs. Leslie's hair.

"Oh, pray begin at the end," almost shrieked the unfortunate lady, who was very sensitive to her hair being pulled; "that's not the right way, Winifride: always begin at the end."

What between consternation at finding she had been so unsuccessful, and puzzled by trying to think what "beginning at the end" might mean, Winifride stood gaping with lips apart, while the instrument of torture, the comb, fell from her hands. She quickly picked it up, and then blushed up to her eyes. Several teeth were broken. She showed it silently to Mrs. Leslie, who could not refrain from expressing much annoyance. It was a beau-

tiful tortoiseshell-comb, and only just bought.

"I am so awkward," said poor Winifride.

"Well, it cannot be helped," said Mrs. Leslie, in a voice of some discomposure; "only I cannot think what upon earth made you drop it."

"I am so awkward," repeated Winifride.

There was nothing more to be said; and Mrs. Leslie began to fear that her evident impatience at this little accident might prove a disedifying preface to the religious instruction she wished to communicate. Recovering herself, therefore, she said:

"Give me the comb, Winifride, and I will just pass it through my hair myself, and you shall then

brush it --- but, mind, very gently."

The hair being disentangled by Mrs. Leslie's more skilful use of the comb, Winifride proceeded to give some very harmless and ineffective pats with the brush to the top of Mrs. Leslie's head, being apparently resolved not to err this time on the side of vigour. As Mrs. Leslie's object was conversation, and Winifride was at least not hurting her, she did not interfere with the process, but resumed the subject of Winifride's early education.

"I suppose you have never learnt much of any thing?"

"No, ma'am, not much," was the sober reply.

Mrs. Leslie thought that "nothing" might have

been substituted for "not much."

"Never went to school?"

"No, I never went to school."

Mrs. Leslie paused, and thought what she should say next that was very simple and intelligible, and then continued:

"I know you cannot read, but I suppose you have been taught some prayers?"

"I know the Our Father and the Hail Mary!"

"Do you know, when you are at Mass, what it is all about?"

Mrs. Leslie remembered her mother's observation, and was anxious to find out if the girl was really as ignorant in that respect as Mrs. Barnard had presumed.

"What it is about, ma'am?" repeated Wini-

fride, musingly, while the pats with the brush were suspended.

"What the priest, I mean, is doing and saying,"

added Mrs. Leslie, in explanation.

"I see what he's doing," said Winifride, "but

I don't know what he is saying."

Mrs. Leslie sighed: she feared her mother was right. Perhaps, however, she had not been understood. She would make another attempt.

"But do you know the meaning of all the priest

is doing?"

"No, ma'am," replied Winifride, readily.

"How do you employ yourself? What do you do while Mass is going on?"

"I say my Rosary."

"Oh, you can say your Rosary, can you?"
"Oh, yes," replied Winifride gaily, glad, apparently, to be able to reply for once in the affir-

mative; "I can say the Rosary very well."
"Very well," repeated Mrs. Leslie, doubtfully; " but you know, Winifride, to say the Rosary very well we must not be contented with repeating the words: we must think about the mysteries. Now, just tell me something about the first of the joyful mysteries."

"I don't think I can," said Winifride, rather

sadly.

"You know, I suppose," proceeded her catechiser, "that it is the Annunciation?"

"Yes," said Winifride, "I know that."

"Now, what is the Annunciation?"

"I don't think I can tell," was the discouraging reply.

"What do you think of while you are saying

the first ten beads of your Rosary?" resumed Mrs.

Leslie, putting the question differently.

"Oh, I think of Our Lady and that beautiful angel, and 'Hail Mary! full of grace: the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

"Why was she so blessed?" asked Mrs. Leslie. Winifride was silent a moment, and then said

very coolly, "I don't know."

"You don't know! really, how very sad!" exclaimed the lady.

"Only that it pleased God," added Winifride,

timidly; "but I can't tell why."

"You don't know, then, that she was so blessed because she was chosen to be the Mother of God?"

"I know she is the Mother of God," replied Winifride; "I did not know you meant that."

"Well, that will do for to-night, Winifride," said Mrs. Leslie, despondingly, taking the brush from her uncouth handmaid; "I am very tired, and must get into bed, instead of sitting with baby while nurse is at her supper. Can I trust you to take my place, and not to fall asleep? He is rather restless to-night; and if he cries, I should like you to take him up and soothe him to sleep again quietly. If he is very fractious, carry him about the room gently; only don't drop my baby as you did the comb."

Mrs. Leslie regretted the remark as soon as made, observing the poor girl look distressed, and added good-humouredly, "Never mind the comb, Winifride. As long as you are careful of the baby, I shall not think of that much. But can I

trust you?"

Winifride replied that she would be very care-

ful of him; and Mrs. Leslie, going into the adjoining apartment, dismissed the nurse to her supper, gazed fondly on her little Arthur—not venturing to kiss him lest she might awake him—and leaving Winifride installed by the cradle, retired into her own bed-room to seek the repose she much needed, but seldom enjoyed.

"How shall I manage to teach that poor ignorant creature any thing?" she said to herself as she lay down: "she is so insuperably dull, as well as disgracefully ignorant. Where little is given, however, it is a comfort to reflect that God requires

little."

Such thoughts occupied the poor invalid for a time, in which, along with some genuine charity, a certain condescending compassion perhaps intermingled. Whether her mind had been too actively occupied previous to lying down, or that the very fatigue which made her feel to desire repose prevented her sleeping, by adding to her feverish unrest, Mrs. Leslie remained wakeful, and wakefulness aggravated her constitutional nervousness. Her thoughts reverted to her baby. He had been peevish and unquiet during the evening, and the anxious mother readily foreboded evil. She listened to the silence till she seemed to conjure up a sound: it was but the throbbing of her own burning temples. She sat up in bed. Surely this time she was not mistaken: it was the baby's cry she had heard.

Nurse has not yet come up. How long she is at her supper! (People always seem long when we are impatient.) There; he is crying again.

Is Winifride awake, and has she followed her directions?

Winifride is awake; since the moment that Mrs. Leslie left her by the child's cradle she had never stirred, never once leant back in her chair, never taken her eyes off her infant charge. Was it stupidity and dulness, or was it anxiety to perform her duties properly that kept her so immovable; her calm grey eyes, with their thick double fringe of dark lashes-the only good feature in her face—fixed upon the sleeping babe, and her clasped hands resting on her knees? Who might tell but He, who is the eternal Witness of our thoughts, and her guardian angel, to whose spiritual eyes our every attitude and gesture are as a transparent language revealing the hidden soul? But now Arthur is stirring; he stretches his little arms, and convulses his little face, and puckers his little mouth, till the whole results in a complaining whimper, ready to develop into an unmitigated roar. Winifride raised him gently from his crib and laid him on her knces, while, without rising, she pushed back the candle, which stood on a high chest of drawers close to her, that its light might not offend the half-opened eyes of the baby. The whimper had been suspended by the change of position, and when it threatened to return, she lifted the infant and rocked it soothingly in her arms. It was quiet again, and Winifride laid it down once more on her knees, and gazed at it with the same calm and passively earnest face. The baby smiled, and the smile was faintly reflected on the face of its young nurse, as with a fond and almost reverential countenance she raised to her lips its tiny hand, which she stooped to kiss, muttering as she did so, "He was a child."

Her lips, it is true, moved, yet the words would have been inaudible, had any one been near her to listen to them. But if none heard her, there was one who saw her at that moment, herself unseen. Mrs. Leslie, disturbed and worried by her feverish anxiety, had risen at last from her bed, and casting her dressing-gown over her shoulders, had dragged her tired limbs to the door, which she gently opened. Her trouble had been needless; but what was it that riveted her to the spot, with her eyes gazing at Winifride with an interest so new and unexpected? The light shaded from the infant fell full on the girl's wide, calm brow, which wore an almost thoughtful aspect; while a smile, so faint that it almost eluded you and vanished while you marked it, played round her lips. Did she look glad? did she look sad? what did she look like as she raised its hand to her lips? Was it distance, was it a peculiar light, which so transformed those ordinary features, and made the curious and astonished eyes which watched her see but one resemblance?

"Strange, strange," muttered Mrs. Leslie to herself, as she crept back to her bed, "that plain little Winifride should look so like to a Madonna!"



CHAPTER IV.

THE DREAM.

LEEP will come at last to the most wakeful eyelids when morning is about to dawn, and when the very possibility of sleep has been given up in despair. Mrs. Leslie then slept. She had

watched while others slept; and now when the working world was beginning to wake and stir, she slept: she slept that half-unconscious sleep which we remember afterwards only by a blank in thought, or by a dream.

And Mrs. Leslie had a dream; and—do not be

surprised-I am going to tell you her dream.

She seemed to be where she really was, in her bed, and her eyes were open, or seemed to be so, watching the first entrance of the white light into her room. Gradually as she gazed at it, it condensed and assumed the appearance of an orb of bright light, oval in form like a medallion; and, as if advancing from a distance, till they at length occupied the centre of the medallion, whose light surrounded them like a glory, she beheld two figures. One was clothed in white from head to foot; he had two silvery wings, and his hair

was so full of light that you could scarce see what was its hue. There was no shadow in him; and the sleeper felt convinced that it was her guardian angel she beheld. He had a veiled figure by the hand that was all shadow, as he was all light, save that over its head was a white veil; but from its shoulder descended a deep blue cloak, covering a long tunic of some still more sombre colour.

"Louisa," said the spirit of light, "you know not who this is that stands before you, and whom

I have brought to you."

"How should I," replied the sleeper, "since it is a veiled figure?" She seemed to answer this mechanically, and more as thinking than express-

ing it.

"There are two veils which conceal her from you," rejoined the bright apparition; "one is her own modesty, and the other is your ignorance. I am come to withdraw the latter, and you must ask her to draw aside the former."

"And what shall I see?" asked Louisa.

"When God sends a gift," replied the angel, "it is to be received with gratitude, not questioning. This is a great gift, and you would not have received it, if you had not shown kindness to a poor girl. When you said, 'Do not send her away, for she is friendless,' I presented this good deed before the Eternal Throne, and the Queen of angels turned to Him who sits on that Throne and refuses her nothing, and asked this gift for you."

Louisa thought her best deed had been her endeavour to teach the poor ignorant girl; indeed, she thought not of the other as a good deed; she had made no reflection upon it, she had retained

no remembrance of it; and so she wondered at the

angel's words. He answered her thoughts—
"Yes, that was a good deed too; but there was little love in it and much vanity. The other was little in itself, it is true, but it was done for the pure love of Him who said, 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in.' Besides, foolish one; know you not that our God is magnificent, and gives royally in reward for our contemptible services? Behold, then, his royal gift!"

As the winged spirit uttered these words, the white veil dropped from the head of the dark figure; and Louisa, to her surprise, saw Winifride standing before her. This, then, was the royal gift of heaven's Eternal King! Louisa had well nigh smiled in derision.

"She is come," said the guardian angel, "to teach you how to love Jesus and Mary."

Wonder upon wonder! Louisa could but gaze in silence; for what words could she have found to express what she thought? or could she have dared to put those thoughts in words? As she gazed, however, a change came over the vision. The bright spirit was gone, but the brilliancy of the orb of light waxed more intense, and Winifride's whole appearance became transformed and glorified. It was still herself, but so irradiated with beauty that Louisa could scarcely look upon her; and in all this beauty and glory still shone forth that one resemblance to the second Eve which had first struck Mrs. Leslie by the light of the flickering candle. The image of Mary, the type of all true spiritual beauty, was stamped upon the features of this poor nursling of poverty, this child of ignorance. The village girl was clothed with the glory of the Queen of Heaven! Louisa prostrated herself in heart, and made an

act of humility, and she awoke.

Mrs. Leslie rose when the sun had been shining and Winifride scrubbing for many hours; and as she dressed she thought about her dream. We must not put faith in dreams. Mrs. Leslie knew this very well, and so do I; at the same time God may send us a vision in a dream. However, I am not going to assert that this was a vision; nor to pretend that if it were not, it had any further claim on attention than have all good thoughts and inspirations with which God and our good angels besiege our hearts during the day. Yet surely they have a claim, and a very weighty one, and so have good dreams. We shall have to give account of all of which we might have made a profit to our souls.

"Is it possible, after all," said Mrs. Leslie to herself, "that I could learn any thing from Winifride? The idea seems so absurd." The impression, however, was too strong upon her mind for her to be able to cast it off. "Perhaps," she resumed, "I ought to learn humility from my dream. I attempted to teach poor Winifride with too much sense of superiority. She may possess qualities, notwithstanding her ignorance, which claim my respect; qualities in which perchance I am deficient. Yes, she is doubtless humble, and I can learn humility from her while she is obtaining knowledge from me. But no; the white figure said, 'She is come to teach you to love Jesus and Mary.' If she loves Jesus and Mary better than I do, what know-

ledge can I give her worth having? Is not love more than knowledge? does it not imply it, while it surpasses it? To love Jesus and Mary, she must know them; to love them better than I do, she must know them better than I do. Yet I cannot reconcile that with her evident ignorance and dulness. May be she profits better by the little she knows; and the way in which she is to teach me is by putting in practice the knowledge I am able to give her, in such a manner as shall stir me up to make a more perfect use of mine."

This last thought was an ingenious device of self-love, but it hardly satisfied Mrs. Leslie's mind. "But why," she mentally continued, "if the example is only future and contingent on my instruction, why was I told I did not know her? and why was she shown to me invested with such glory, and clothed with such a likeness? Ah! doubtless that was the recollection of the strange fancy which crossed my mind the night before: but what if that fancy were sent me for the same object as the dream? Well, at any rate, I know we ought to feel our imperfections, and to be willing to learn by the humblest means. There are none so abject but they may teach us something. I will see that poor girl again, and will lead her to speak of herself. By so doing, at least I shall win her confidence, even if I learn nothing myself."

Having come to this resolution as she completed her toilet, Mrs. Leslie repaired to the drawingroom, where her late breakfast and the tender inquiries of Mrs. Barnard awaited her—inquiries which the more than usual paleness of her daughter and her pre-occupied air served to stimulate. Mrs. Leslie, however, though she loved her mother, shrank instinctively from any such confidence as would have been implied in the mention of her dream; she knew that her feelings would be almost as little understood, or at least as little encouraged, as they would have been by her Protestant father, who would have undoubtedly remarked that if Louisa could only get a little more air and exercise, he would be rid of these fancies. Air and exercise, she would be rid of these fancies. Air and exercise, such was Mr. Barnard's infallible and invariable receipt. They were good for headache, good for heartache, good for every ache which can afflict human nature; and if the complaint, bodily or mental, was beyond the reach of benefit from air and exercise, why then it was also beyond the ken of poor Mr. Barnard's faculties.

"Ah! Louisa," he remarked on the morning in question, as he buttoned up his coat previous to sallying forth; "a fine bracing morning; what a

pity you cannot get out !"

Louisa shivered at the thought; and her mother, understanding at least her physical feelings better, laid a warm shawl over her daughter's feet, as she lay upon the sofa; and giving a stir to the fire, and another careful look to see if there was any comfort she could supply,—the result of which look was the placing the last new novel within the invalid's reach,—she left her to attend to her own daily household occupations.



CHAPTER V.

WINIFRIDE JONES'S HISTORY.

OME in, Winifride; come in," said Mrs.

Leslie to the girl, as she hung shily on
the door, having already announced her
desire of entering by a very solid knock,
her courage apparently failing her when

she had set her foot within the decorous precincts of the drawing-room. "What do you want? Do shut the door, and come in; I feel such a draught of air."

Mrs. Leslie's conciliatory intentions unfortunately broke down at the first shock to her nervous sensitiveness. Alas! what are our feeble resolutions unless the life and power of Divine love is breathed into them? She had intended to be all smiles and gentleness; but Winifride's unexpected appearance had taken her by surprise, and nature broke out, the sensitive plant's nature, which was hers.

"Please, ma'am," said Winifride, shutting the door by turning the handle, so that it opened again directly.

"Push it, Winifride; don't turn it," said Mrs. Leslie, assuming as much placidity as she was able.

"Please, ma'am," recommenced Winifride, having succeeded at last in effectually closing the door, "Mrs. Aldridge told me I ought to have begged your pardon for breaking your comb; and so I am come to say I am very sorry, and hope you'll excuse it."

"This was not at all necessary, my good girl," said Mrs. Leslie, kindly. "I had no doubt but that you were sorry, and I really had forgotten all about it."

"I was very sorry," replied Winifride, "but I did not say so; and Mrs. Aldridge says, as I could not replace it, the least I could do was to ask a lady's pardon."

"Well, Winifride, I am sure you have it very freely, and had it before you asked for it. It was but an accident, after all. I wish I had never done

any thing worse."

"Thank you, ma'am," replied Winifride, and dropping an awkward curtsey, was about to make her exit, when Mrs. Leslie detained her.

"Stay, Winifride; I want very much to have a little talk with you. Come forward; I can't speak at that distance. You can sit down;" and Mrs.

Leslie pointed to a chair.

Winifride seized the chair, drew it back about a yard, and sat down, looking extremely uncomfort-Mrs. Leslie perceived it, and turned in her mind what she should say to set the girl at her ease. A happy thought occurred to her.
"I want," she said, "to talk to you about Far-

leigh. Mrs. Aldridge tells me it was your native

place. When I was in better health than I am now, I was very fond of riding, and used often to pass through it. I thought it such a very pretty village; and there was a delightful common for a

gallop, I remember."

Winifride's whole appearance brightened, and a cheerful smile lighted up her face at the mention of her village home. Mrs. Leslie looked at her with curiosity to see if she could trace any likeness to the Winifride of her dream. The girl, after all, was not so very plain. She had good eyes, and a fine wide brow; and if her other features were ordinary, they had at least nothing remarkable about them. She had not much colour, but had a general look of health diffused over her face, which was ruddy rather than rosy; and when a blush, as was not unfrequent, heightened her complexion, and a smile was added to it, her appearance might be said to be far from unpleasing. Still there was nothing divine. These thoughts passed rapidly through Mrs. Leslie's mind, along with the perception that she had hit upon the right means of relieving the girl's embarrassment.

"And the squire's park, and the great house—Mr. Mordaunt's, I mean—did you see that?" asked Winifride. "It is beautiful; and the deer among the trees—I never see such animals but there."

"Oh, yes, Winifride," replied Mrs. Leslie; "I used to ride through the park sometimes, and admire the fine trees and the deer very much."

"Sure!" rejoined Winifride, "to think of your having been there, and such a way off too for you to go!"

"It is only eight miles," said Mrs. Leslie; "and

I was not always as I am now, stretched on a sofa. I thought nothing of a ride of sixteen miles;" and Mrs. Leslie sighed a little as she remembered her days of health and strength.

"There's not a prettier place, I think," said

Winifride with warmth.

Mrs. Leslie was struck with the change that had come over the young girl. She was no longer the poor, awkward, stupid thing, called up for the purpose of being questioned, and having her ignorance probed by a superior being, but she was a fellow-creature, if but a humble one, with a sympathy of tastes, feelings, and affections. The mutual admiration of her native village had created a bond of union, and bridged over the separation which station and education had established between them. Winifride, however, had not forgotten her respect; and after this little outbreak of enthusiasm about the beauties of Farleigh Park, she remained silent.

"There is no Catholic chapel, is there, at Far-

leigh?" asked Mrs. Leslie.

"No, ma'am, none at all; and no Catholics either, only me."

"How came you, Winifride, then, to be a Catho-

lic? Are you a convert?"

"Mother was a Catholic, but she died when I was nigh seven years old. Father was a Protestant; but he died very soon after too."

"And who took care of your religion when your mother was dead?" inquired Mrs. Leslie; "for you said there were no other Catholics at the place."

"No one cared about my religion," replied the girl. "I knew nothing much about it, only what

I remembered mother saying. But that was not a great deal, for she was out washing all day at the squire's laundry; and when she was at home, father was there too, and I don't think as he liked much hearing about mother's religion. She used to make me say the Our Father and the Hail Mary! afore I went to bed, and she taught me to make the sign of the cross."

"It was a great blessing," observed Mrs. Leslie, "that you did not lose your faith, left so young to yourself, and surrounded by Protestants. Know-ing so little too, and with nothing to keep up that little, there was a danger of your forgetting all

about it."

"Oh, I could not forget it!" said Winifride. "Mother said to me when she was dying, 'Winifride,' says she, 'I have not been able to teach you much; and now I am going to leave you, and there'll be no one at all to tell you about your religion. But do you never leave it; promise me that. They will want you to go to the Protestant church, but do you never go inside its walls; they will want you to go to the Protestant school to learn to read and write, but don't you go. You'll get book-learning there, but you'll be taught bad things. You'll be taught not to love our Blessed Lady, and to speak ill of her; and Jesus won't love you if you don't love His dear Mother.' And I cried very much when I heard mother talk of that."
Winifride paused from modesty. She had been

surprised into a long history about herself; but Mrs. Leslie, now deeply interested, begged her to continue.

"I want very much to hear the rest. Do go

on, Winifride. What else did your mother say to

vou?"

"Well, ma'am, she said, 'Jesus, you know, is your God, and your best and only real friend, and He was nailed to a cross for the love of you; and Mary is His Mother, who is most like to Him and most dear to Him, and is reigning in heaven with Him, and you are her child, much more than you are mine, and she can take care of you, which I can't. So now, Winifride, remember, never do any thing to displease Jesus and Mary; and try and be like Mary, for that is the way to please Jesus, and to be like Him.' And then mother did not say much more, for she was getting very faint; but she gave me two little prints, and kissed me, and gave me her blessing, and then she died."

There was a pause - on Winifride's side, because she had come to the end of her story; on Mrs. Leslie's, from deep emotion. However, anxious to hear more, she resumed the conversation.

"What were the prints, Winifride?"
"Here they are," replied the girl, producing from her pocket the shabby old cover of some small book, whose contents had been all torn out. while the two prints were pasted inside, the better

to preserve them.

One was of Jesus crucified, with arrows proceeding from His five wounds, along with the drops of blood which flowed from them, and especially from the wound in His sacred side, His heart being visibly represented. The whole print was also surrounded with hearts, which the arrows were about to strike, and under it was written, "I will draw them with the bands of love." The other print

represented the Holy Family of Nazareth—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The Mother of God, with her hands meekly clasped upon her knees, watched the child Jesus, who caressed a lamb before the cottage-door. St. Joseph, leaning on a little wooden table, near which both he and the "blessed among women" sat, was reading with a serious and collected countenance; a vine clustered upon a trellis over their heads. The engravings were works of piety more than art. There was no beauty in the first; and if there was some prettiness and sweetness in the last, it would have shocked a critical taste by its total inappropriateness, locally speaking, of costume. It was the outside of a European cottage, and the Mother of God was habited as any European peasant might be; yet, perchance, the absence of oriental colouring only made the picture more real to the eyes of those for whom it was intended.

"And this was all, then, my good girl," resumed Mrs. Leslie, "which you had to speak to you of your faith. And did you know what was meant by these?" she asked, pointing to the arrows and hearts.

"No," replied Winifride, "I knew nothing about the Heart of Jesus then," and she coloured as if through some deep emotion; "but still I thought He showed His Heart to me in the picture so wounded that I might love Him."

"And did your father want to take you to the Protestant church, and send you to school?"

"Yes, ma'am, he did, and was very angry. Father knew no better. He did not know about our faith. He took me once to the school against my

will; but when he had left me there, I slipped away, and hid myself in a field all day. After that he never wanted me to go. He saw it was no good, and I wouldn't learn; and poor father soon fell ill and died, and then I was with aunt."

"Was she kind to you?"

"Pretty well. She did not care about my going to school. She lived a good way off, and wanted me at home; she was an old woman, and used to go and weed the squire's gravel-walks. They was very fine, the pleasure-grounds, as they called them, very fine."

Mrs. Leslie was more anxious to hear Winifride's religious history than any description of Mr. Mordaunt's grounds, to which the girl had an evident desire to digress. "You never were at Mass, I suppose?"

"No, ma'am, I knew nothing about Mass at

all."

"Did you know any thing of the Sacraments?"

"No, ma'am, nothing; I knew nothing of the sacraments—oh, yes, I knew about baptism, because mother told me I had been baptised by a priest when they lived at some other place, before father came to get work at Farleigh; but if I knew any thing else then, I forgot it afterwards. I only remembered what I told you; and besides that, I knew what I learnt from the Our Father and the Hail Mary!"

"But you tried to the best of your knowledge

to keep God's commandments?"

"No, ma'am, I knew nothing about the commandments: I never learnt them, because I could not read. I don't remember ever thinking about the commandments. I wished to do nothing to displease Jesus, and I wished very much to be like Mary; only you see, ma'am, I was so ignorant that I did a great many things to displease Him; and there was no one to tell me how to be like Mary, nor what she was like."

Mrs. Leslie covered her face with her hands to hide the feelings which were working in her mind. Winifride paused.

"Go on, Winifride," she said; "tell me all the rest. I like to hear it. What happened next?"

"Well, ma'am, when I was about fifteen, I believe, aunt got me employed at the squire's laundry, as mother had been. There was a many girls there besides me, and I dare say I was worse than them; but they said and did things which it did not please me to see and hear, and I was not happy: they laughed at me, too, which I did not like, and at my religion, and that was worse. And then I was grumpy and sulky with them, which was not the right way I know now, and not what our Lady would have done. Well, I think I worked there about two years, and I got no better, only I prayed very much to know more about Jesus and about Mary."

"God was sure to answer such a prayer," said

Mrs. Leslie.

"He did, ma'am; for about the time I'm speaking of, it happened Mr. Mordaunt took for his groom a man as was a Catholic, our John—John Ranger, what lives here now. The stables was close to the laundry; and some of the girls went and told him there was a Catholic among them the himself, and so he came to speak to me one

day, as I was going home from my work, and asked me questions about my religion, and how I kept to it, and what I knew. John was very good to me, ma'am, and told me many things he knew and I did not, and how I ought to go to confession, and not live like a heathen that way. He told me, too, there was a priest eleven miles off, at the convent at Grassover, what's only three miles from here, and I ought to get instruction; and so I walked there the first Sunday after he told me this."

"You walked all that way and back, did you, Winifride?"

"If it had been fifty miles or more, I must have gone," said the girl earnestly, "when I knew Jesus was there. For John told me He was there always on the altar; and oh, how I longed to go! And then I was to get pardon for my sins, and learn how to please Jesus. But the nuns were very kind to me, and Father Musgrave too, and they got me a lift back."

" And I suppose the priest at Grassover in-

structed you?"

"He is still a teaching of me," said Winifride, "and so are the nuns; and when I know enough I am to make my first communion;" and Winifride's face brightened when she said this, as she turned her eyes for a moment full upon Mrs. Leslie, a thing she seldom did, as they were commonly rather cast down, and seldom rested upon any one with attention.

"And how came you to leave Farleigh?" asked

the lady.

"Why, ma'am, when the old gentleman died that

was very kind and liberal, the young squire was a different man, and did not like Catholics, and said he wouldn't employ any in his service. I heard the housekeeper say he was a Vangelical; but I don't rightly know what that means. It must be a bad religion any how that deprives poor people of their bread. Well, John was turned off, and so was I, and I had no friend to help me, only Father Musgrave; but he was a kind friend to me, and got me this situation."

"I suppose," remarked Mrs. Leslie, whose curiosity was a little excited, "that John came here

because you did?"

She almost regretted her question, however, when she observed a painful blush pass over the girl's countenance. She did not answer at once, and then said rather gravely, "I can't say why he came here; but I suppose he was glad to get a place, same as I was."

"However," said Mrs. Leslie, "you don't need his help now, for you have better instructors."

"That's true, ma'am," replied Winifride; "but I shall always be thankful to John, for he showed me the way to them, and I hope God will reward him."

"Well, Winifride," said Mrs. Leslie, "I will not detain you longer. I have been much interested with your story; but tell me one thing before you go. What made you mention to Mrs. Aldridge that you had broken my comb? Did you think you ought to tell of yourself? There was no obligation which made it your duty."

Winifride looked at her fingers, and seemed embarrassed what to reply. "I can't say, ma'am, I

thought as to whether it was my duty. I'm very ignorant about that still. You see I have only one way when I am puzzled."

" And what's that, Winifride?"

"I have two ways, but it all comes to one way."

" Pray tell me, Winifride."

"Well, then, you see, ma'am, I try and think what our Lady would have done, because if I do like her, then I'm sure I please Jesus; and if I can't make out or remember, then I beg the Heart of Jesus to tell me what He wishes."

"And what did you think our Lady would have

"Oh, ma'am, it never could have happened to her."

"Mary could not have sinned," replied Mrs. Leslie, "but might she not have injured a thing accidentally?"

"Oh, no," exclaimed Winifride, almost indignantly; "our Lady never did any thing awkward. She did every thing quite perfectly."

"Who told you that, Winifride?"

"I don't remember, but I know it quite well. And so then I asked Jesus what would please His Sacred Heart, and I soon knew."

" How did you know?"

"I remembered His Heart when on earth was always full of grief and sorrow. Sister Mary Joseph told me so the other day; and it was for me, and so I must not be so glad to get out of the way of a little pain. I beg your pardon, ma'am, for talking to you all this. I'm very ignorant, and so I know no other way than this to tell me what to do."

"Most blessed ignorance!" thought Mrs. Leslie, "that could discover such a road, the road of pure love;" but she respected the girl's simplicity, and was silent. And so she allowed Winifride to depart, unconscious that she had done aught but confess her ignorance. But Mrs. Leslie had received a lesson—a lesson she never could forget.

"How true was my dream!" she mentally ex-

"How true was my dream!" she mentally exclaimed, "and oh, my cold, proud, ignorant heart!—ignorant of the very first rudiments of true devotion—how has it been rebuked by this simple, uninstructed child, who is walking in the ways of perfection unknown to herself, while I, so earthly and so worldly, have dared to despise her! Ah, I will at least henceforth take heed to my Saviour's words, 'See that you despise not one of these little ones.'"





CHAPTER VI.

THE CONTRAST.

ARGARET CROSBY, the parlour-maid, was a very different sort of girl to Winifride Jones. You perhaps could hardly have found two more unlike. Margaret's life was all outside herself, Winifride's all inside. Whatever knowledge, abilities, and wit Margaret possessed (and the stock was not large) was ready to her hand, and producible at pleasure. Winifride, on the contrary, was slow. She had to think awhile to know what she thought; and it was then a question whether she could put it into words. It had, however, when uttered, the merit of being her genuine thought; while it was ten to one but Margaret was answering parrot-like, or at any rate without the smallest reflection.

Margaret was some years older than Winifride, and she had had the advantage in her childhood of being sent to school, where she had gone through the process of beginning to learn to read. Idle, however, vain and fond of gossip, she had never cared to devote much time to keeping up or improving what she knew; so that really, practically speaking, she was as unable to make any real use

of a book as Winifride was. Still she pretended to be able to read, and would have been much mortified had she imagined that she was supposed to be ignorant of that accomplishment. She went to Mass, accordingly, with a very gay Missal with gilt edges to the leaves, the present of some lady, and kept it open before her, generally in the wrong place; holding poor little Winifride very cheap who knelt beside her saying her Rosary. Indeed, Margaret was rather ashamed of her companion; "It looked so like one of the very poor Irish," she would observe sometimes, "to be saying your Rosary all Mass-time;" or, "It looked as if one could not read, or was too poor to have a book." Was, then, the Rosary—a devotion so dear to God's holy Mother, and in which saints have found treasures of contemplation and of sanctity found treasures of contemplation and of sanctity —a device only for the unlearned, a resource for those who do not enjoy the privilege of using a book? Is it a shame to be too poor to possess one? or is it any disgrace to be mistaken for a poor Irish girl? Well might it be if some of our English poor, ay and our English rich too, would imitate the humble and fervent piety of so many of the Irish poor. Margaret, however, was a long way off such thoughts as these. Ladies used books, and so she considered it low not to do the same; indeed, Margaret's mind was wholly occupied with appearances, not realities.

If her capabilities in the reading line were not much greater than those of Winifride, neither was her religious knowledge much more extensive; while I need not say that her appreciation and hold of what she knew would have stood no com-—a device only for the unlearned, a resource for

parison. However, having been at school, where she had been in the habit of being catechised, she was able to answer verbally certain questions to which Winifride could make no reply. The very thoughtfulness of the latter stood in her way on these occasions. She could remember ideas better than words, and was too sincere to be contented with giving the routine answers which flowed glibly from Margaret's tongue, had she even known them. She strove to understand the meaning of the question put to her, and not being quick of appreheasion, she frequently mistook the drift of it, and so appeared much more ignorant than she really was. Hence, when Mrs. Leslie had put a few ordinary questions to the two girls, she had been satisfied with Margaret's replies, while Winifride's stupidity and ignorance had quite shocked her.

But the grand difference between Winifride and Margaret lay in this, that the one lived for God, and the other for herself. Margaret was her own centre; and though she certainly wished to escape hell and go to heaven, (as who does not that believes in their existence?) she did not sincerely try to please God, and was negligent about it. She was careless and indifferent respecting venial sin, and this of the worst sort, namely, deliberate venial sin. Like many persons in her state of mind, she would draw no distinction between those venial sins which are the result of surprise or infirmity, and those sins which are committed with full purpose and systematically: yet surely it was a wilful fault in her to confound these two descriptions of sin. She knew the difference well enough,

if she had not preferred to forget and ignore it; conscience, however, would not always permit her to do this, and her transgressions of this kind were sometimes so serious as to alarm her. She would then confess them, and make some species of resolution against them; that is, she resolved not to commit again those offences whose dangerous proximity to mortal sin had frightened her; but there was no generous determination to avoid every thing, whether small or great, which could be displeasing to God; and so she soon fell back into the same or like offences. Margaret, it is plain, therefore, was living in a very perilous state: she was walking on the edge of a precipice; she was following a course which, if persevered in, leads to mortal sin, as surely as effect follows cause.

The two girls had entered on their situations about the same time, and Margaret had been a considerable source of trial to Winifride, not only by many little petty annoyances, from undervaluing her and overvaluing herself, but in a more serious way. Winifride had met with few friends, but her feelings were deep and her heart affectionate, and she was especially grateful for any benefit of a spiritual kind, placing, as she did, the true relative value upon earthly and heavenly blessings. The painful blush Mrs. Leslie had remarked had a cause; and the pause before she answered her whether John had sought a situation in their family on her account, was to give herself time to reflect what she could answer with truth. Her reply was no violation of it. She did not know that it was his motive, for he never told

her so; but she had one of those strong convictions which rarely deceive us, that it was at any rate a great inducement. Not a word of love, however, had ever passed between them; so I cannot pretend to tell you why Winifride, usually so distrustful of herself, and so little given to presuming upon being an object of preference, should have supposed she had an interest in John's affections. Yet so it was: she had felt it without making much reflection upon it; it seemed the most natural thing in the world that she should be deeply grateful for the good service he had rendered her, and that they, the only two children of Holy Church in the midst of strangers, as was the case with them at Farleigh, should entertain for each other a specially warm fraternal and sisterly affection.

But now all was changed; and perhaps Winifride scarcely knew how much he was to her till this change took place. The lively and brilliant Margaret (since the truth must be told) had dazzled the imagination of poor John. She had a style about her which threw Winifride into the shade; and though his affection for the latter, which was grounded entirely upon his value and respect for her, might have stood out against Margaret's superior charms, yet it was not proof against her endeavours to attract him. John was a simple, plain sort of man, and had not been accustomed to be made much of; he was therefore insensibly pleased and won upon by seeing himself an object of interest to one whom his own eyes told him, as well as every one else's tongue, was a very pretty girl. Margaret, in fact, did not care

a straw about him; but she liked to be always furnished with an admirer, and never felt in thorough good-humour with herself and every one else unless she possessed one; so being at this moment unprovided, she made an assault upon poor John's heart, and robbed Winifride of her treasure,—a theft indeed which she perhaps would have considered of small consequence, but of which, in justice to her, it must be observed, she was innocent; as, in fact, it was the last thing which would have crossed her mind, that Winifride could have an interest in any one's heart.

Yet when I say Margaret robbed Winifride of John's affections, all I mean is, that she superseded her; she did not take the place in his heart that Winifride had held. His liking to her was quite different: it was based on nothing solid, but it was more lively. It worried him, while it interested him; and the difference between the two affections was above all things shown in their different effect upon him for good and for evil. Most true it is that we become more or less like what we love; and John was an altered man since this showy damsel had made him forget the modest and retiring object of his first preference.

I do not wish to hide Winifride's faults. Her natural disposition, when displeased, was towards sulkiness and grumpiness, as she called it herself; and this grumpiness not showing her off to much advantage, helped on the very thing she dreaded. Margaret was all smiles and chat, while Winifride had shut herself up in cold and inaccessible silence.

It was impossible, however, that Winifride could

long remain the prey to an evil temper. Not only was she sure to confess whatever might appear to her to have in it a shadow of offence against her Lord, but she always laid her whole heart open to the nuns, who took such a charitable interest in her. Whenever she could obtain permission to go out, this was her recreation, to walk over to Grassover; and she was sure to return refreshed in spirit, and with some treasured piece of information concerning the Heart of Jesus or our dear Lady, communicated to her by Sister Mary Joseph, which to Winifride always became immediately a practical lesson.

She learnt, then, from her kind teachers, that she must dismiss as much as possible all thoughts of the preference of which she had supposed herself the object; and, above all, she must nourish no resentment or bitter feeling, under whatever plausible pretext, against the person who had been the cause of her disappointment. "Remember," said Sister Mary Joseph, "that you treat her with particular charity; that you take every opportunity of speaking well of her when you can with truth, and when you cannot, be silent. Do not allow yourself to censure her even where she may be so plainly wrong that, in any other case, you might innocently have done so. By this means you will avoid all danger of displeasing the Heart of Jesus by uncharitableness. Recollect that Jesus, when He was hanging on the cross, prayed for His murderers, and made excuses to His Father for them. And cannot you, for the love of Him, excuse the unconscious injury this poor girl has done you, if, after all, it be an injury?"

"Oh, yes, I can," exclaimed Winifride, "but then..."

"But then what?" inquired Sister Mary Joseph.
"I have always a great mistrust of but thens."

"I was going to say," observed Winifride, "that John seems none the better for the change himself. He's quite different, and seems to think now more

about Margaret than his religion; and-"

"Hush, hush!" said Sister Mary Joseph; "this is not right, Winifride; you must not allow yourself to have such thoughts; and if they come into your head, you must banish them. It may be all envy and jealousy that makes you think so; and at any rate it is not safe to allow yourself in any indignation against a person you are tempted to be resentful against."

The tears came into Winifride's eyes as she

owned her fault.

"And now, Winifride," continued the sister, "I have told you how our Lord forgave those who crucified Him; but you were tempted to think it was excusable to be angry with those who injured others. Tell me, then, what do you think our Lady, when she stood on Calvary, felt towards those who were driving the sharp nails into the blessed hands and feet of her Son? What did she feel when she heard the fearful sounds of the hammer? and what were her thoughts, as she stood those three hours at the foot of the croos, about those who had so torn and mangled her beloved Jesus, and who were still insulting His sufferings and railing at Him in the midst of His agony? What do you think she felt towards them?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Winifride, covering

her face with her hands; "but it must have been horror,—it must have been a dreadful feeling to look on those monsters, and think of what they had done."

"It was love," said Sister Mary Joseph; "it was

pitying love."

Winifride looked up, and saw the nun's face beaming with that divine charity of which she

spoke.

"Yes," she continued, "Mary felt no anger against the murderers of her Son; she hated the sin, but she loved the sinners, even as the adorable heart of her Son loved them; and as drop by drop that precious blood fell to the ground to atone for His crucifiers' guilt, as well as for that of the whole world, so was the sweet balm of charity poured forth from the afflicted heart of Mary. Her heart wept tears of blood for sinners, and, in the midst of its bitterness, overflowed with love unspeakable. We cannot help feeling the temptation of anger, Winifride, for we are not, like Mary, free from the revolt of the passions, a freedom she owed to the special grace of her immaculate conception; but we can copy her by never giving way to it under any pretext. It is very difficult to be angry without sinning; and in your present case, you may depend upon it, it would be next to impossible."

It was quite sufficient for Winifride to know how Mary would have acted, to set her instantly and most resolutely upon copying her. From this day she redoubled in kindness of manner and obligingness to Margaret. She endeavoured to dismiss the remembrance of her disappointed affections; and whenever it would, as was sometimes the case, obtrude itself involuntarily upon her, she said a *Hail Mary* for him and one for Margaret, and generously turned her thoughts to something else, to honour by this sacrifice the sacred heart of Jesus and the sorrowful heart of His immaculate Mother.





CHAPTER VII.

THE INTERESTING STRANGER.

HAT a smart man that is at Mr. Laycock's !" observed Margaret to Mrs.
Munt, the Protestant nurse of Mrs.
Leslie's baby, as they dawdled over
the remains of their tea for the sake

of a little gossip.

Winifride had already risen, and was occupied in some preparatory arrangements for the up-stairs dinner, the hour of which was approaching. John was spinning out his meal, and chewing as slowly as he could, the kitchen having lately proved peculiarly attractive to him.

"You may say so," answered Mrs. Munt; "I

think he'll astonish the good folks here."

"I don't know about astonishing me," said Margaret, whose pride was easily roused; "I've seen a Frenchman before."

"He's not a Frenchman," said Mrs. Munt; "he's

a Swiss.

"Well, he's a furriner of some sort; it's all the same."

"He's quite a superior sort of man," rejoined Mrs. Munt; "quite above his situation. He has got some landed property."

"O lawk!" exclaimed Margaret, now confessedly

astonished.

"It's as true as true; I know all about it," said Mrs. Munt, as she consequentially swallowed her last mouthful of tea, and pushed away her cup with an air.

"If he's such a fine gentleman," observed John, with an accompanying discontented grunt, "I won-

der he goes to service."

"There may be tempory reasons," replied Mrs. Munt, "only I know what I say. He's half a Belgium. His mother was from there; and he has an estate what was hers in some forest. Law! what's the name? I know it as well as my own."

"Don't tell us all this stuff," said John, "about estates in forests. I don't believe a word of it."

"Then you needn't," observed Mrs. Munt, very

shortly, and not very sweetly.

"Don't you mind," said Margaret eagerly; "but tell us all about it. I shouldn't wonder if he was some one in disguise. He's quite mysterious-like; quite a romance."

"Disguise—I dare say enough of that!" growled

John to himself.

"I'm intimate there, very, as you know," observed Mrs. Munt, addressing Margaret, and turning a deaf ear to John; "so I must be up to things, if any one is. When Mr. and Mrs. Laycock made their tour on the continent this summer, Karl—that means, Charles——"

"Then why don't you say Charles at once?"

grumbled John.

"Karl went with them as courier. They're quite grand men, them couriers; and now he's just with them for a short time on their return; but I can't suppose that he'll be after staying very long."

"He'll be wanted back to see to his estate, of

course," remarked John.

"Now don't be so foolish and stupid, John," said Margaret; "you've not seen him, or you'd never talk that way. He must be somebody. Only look how he's dressed!"

"Ah! but," said Mrs. Munt, "you ought to see him on Sundays at our church; he's a Protestant, you know. The first Sunday he was here, they showed him into the best strangers' pew, and I declare I don't wonder; he might be a duke."

"I have seen him though, on Sunday," rejoined Margaret, with a look of some satisfaction, and nodding her head. "He was at our chapel last Sunday. I thought as he meant to go, for when I took a note to Mrs. Laycock for missis on Saturday he answered the door; it was then I see him; he asked me particlars about the hours, and so forth. So, says I, you'd better go; and he said he did not say he wouldn't; and that was as good as a promise, you see."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Munt, "only think

if you should have made a conquest !"

Margaret blushed and giggled, and said, "Silly!

Perhaps I'll make a convert, at any rate."

"You're not expecting to convert such a chap as that," said John.

"I'd like him to hear you call him a chap, John," replied Margaret. "Why he has whiskers like that"—and she held her hands up descriptively on either side of her glowing and animated countenance—"and he wore gold studs when he was at Mass, and a pin with some blue stone in it. I saw it quite plain."

"I think you might be doing better than looking about you, and staring at strange men, Margaret," observed Mrs. Aldridge, drily, who had just entered the kitchen. Margaret was sitting with her back to the door, and had been talking so eagerly that she had not heard her come in.

The rebuke did not please her. "Well, I can't

The rebuke did not please her. "Well, I can't help seeing; I suppose seeing's not staring. I'm not always with my eyes down like Winifride, or I should expect to knock my nose against some-

thing."

"You might answer properly at least," rejoined the housekeeper; "and if you'd copy Winifride in not looking about you at Mass, it would be none the worse for you. I don't say," she added, observing Winifride within hearing, and not sorry to give her a rap too, "I don't say but what I'd be glad Winifride would look one in the face sometimes. I don't like your down looks. There's a difference."

Winifride made no response, and Mrs. Aldridge's attention reverted to the tea-table. "But bless my heart!" she continued, "what's all this? The teathings ought to be cleared away, and washed besides, by this time. Dear me! If I'm only out of the way for a moment! Come, brush about, Winifride; take these things away; I want the table."

The gossiping circle was soon dispersed. John had slunk away quickly, Mrs. Aldridge having given a look of marked surprise at finding him still there. Margaret went up to lay the cloth in the dining-room; Mrs. Munt sauntered off, looking what Mrs. Aldridge called "not best pleased;" and the dominion of the kitchen was left to the house-keeper and her scrub.

Mrs. Munt was not a good friend for Margaret. She was a vulgar-minded, gossiping woman, with no particular good quality to recommend her. Mrs. Leslie kept her on from a persuasion, founded on I know not what, that she was indispensable to her infant. Mothers are apt to take up such notions about their children's nurses, and Mrs. Munt was glad, of course, to encourage the prejudice. Mrs. Aldridge did not get on well with Mrs. Munt; and though she kept within the bounds of politeness in her intercourse with her, yet she was so plainly distasteful to her, that Mrs. Barnard shocked Louisa Leslie very much one day by declaring that Aldridge, she was sure, "did not like a bone in her body."

Mrs. Munt considered Winifride as too much below her to notice; but Margaret, for want of any thing better, she condescended to make a friend of. She introduced her to the acquaintance of the servants at Mrs. Laycock's, who were friends of her own—an acquaintance Margaret took good care to cultivate when any opportunity offered; and moreover bestowed all her gossip upon her, for which the foolish girl was duly grateful.

"Here, Margaret—here's a letter for you," said Mrs. Munt, a few days after the conversation just related; "and you may thank me that you have it at all. Do you know, that stupid little puss Winifride was refusing to take it in, and declared there was no one of the name in the house? I'm not sure it was not malice more than stupidity."

"How was that?" asked Margaret.

"Why, the boy says to Winifride-I heard it all, for I was listening at the top of the kitchenstairs-'Here's a letter for Miss Crosby.' 'There's no miss of that name here, says Winifride; 'there's only Mrs. Barnard and Mrs. Leslie lives here;' and then the boy said something about a mistake, he supposed, and was going away, only I screamed out and stopped him."

"What did the stupid girl mean by doing that?"
"I'll tell you," said Mrs. Munt. "She pretended, you see, she did not just at that moment remember your name was Crosby, and she never thought of the letter being for you when it was directed 'Miss.'"

"I like her impertinence!" said Margaret.

"It's a bit of her sauce, I believe," said Mrs. Munt, "and I wouldn't stand it."

"That girl's very aggravating," said Margaret, examining her letter, the contents of which she did not seem to be able to make out.

"What's it all about?" asked Mrs. Munt.

"It's such a hand!" said Margaret, who could not read writing very well, but was not fond of owning it.

"Oh, I see -it's Elizabeth Duck's writing," replied Mrs. Munt, inspecting the cover. "I thought I knew the boy's face; he does the gardening at Mr. Laycock's." "Well, what am I to answer, do you think?" said Margaret, handing her companion the letter—an ingeniously evasive question, as she had not in the least ascertained its purport.

"Oh, an invitation, I see! Why, I would go,

by all means."

"I'd like to," replied Margaret, her eyes sparkling at the thought. "Let me see,—what's the day? Tuesday, isn't it?"—(that was the only word she had been able to make out.) "Read it me again."

Mrs. Munt proceeded to do so. It was an invitation to Margaret from Mrs. Laycock's servants to go and drink tea with them on the following Tuesday, and accompany them afterwards to the fair, which was to be held the same week on the neigh-

bouring common.

"I'm afraid I'll never get leave," said Margaret, musing. "You see, Mrs. Aldridge has settled we are all to go to the fair in turn on Monday; but that's in a very stupid way; for we are to come home early, before any fun begins; and so I'm sure she'll never let me go more than the once, nor to stay late. Dear me, I could cry about it—to have to refuse just what I'd have liked so much! Was ever any thing so provoking?"

"Don't be an ass, and go for to refuse it," said Mrs. Munt. "Why can't you say yes, and trust to chance? You'll manage it somehow when the time comes, I'll be bound; and if you can't, why then you can't, and it's quite time enough to say

so then."

And so it was settled; and Mrs. Munt obligingly wrote the answer, Margaret politely observing she

would do it better than she would. She might well say so, as she could not write intelligibly.

The letter then being written and sealed, and safely deposited in the pocket of Margaret's apron, she ran off to scramble through her work, her head full of the thoughts of the elegant stranger with the whiskers and studs, and of a hundred plans how to secure the amusement, the very anticipation of which made her almost forget what she was about, and actually forget to scold Winifride for having refused to acknowledge her as "Miss Crosby."





CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUSPICION.



this afternoon?" said Winifride to Mrs.

Aldridge, after dinner on the same day
upon which Margaret had received her
invitation.

"A very inconvenient day Saturday," replied Mrs. Aldridge. "I don't think you can be spared, Winifride."

Winifride looked more disappointed than usual when a request was refused, and she still stood there as if meditating some further remark.

"Why do you particularly wish to go to-day?"

asked the housekeeper.

"Because, ma'am," replied Winifride, colouring, "I'm to make my first communion to-morrow, and I want to go to confession; and Sister Mary Joseph said if I could come to-day, she could spare me half an hour to talk to me."

"Could you not make your confession to-morrow morning before Mass?" asked Mrs. Aldridge.

"I could," said Winifride, "but-"

"But you like better to go to-day," added Mrs.

Aldridge, finishing her sentence; "and, of course, the pleasure of the walk to Grassover and back has nothing to say to it?"

Winifride looked uncomfortable, but said no-

thing.

"Well," resumed Mrs. Aldridge, after a moment's silence, "it comes to this: I can't allow of so much going out; so if you go one day, you can't go another. I meant to have sent you to the fair on Monday, with John to take care of you, and then you were to have come back, and Margaret was to have had her turn; but if you go to Grassover to-day, that can't be. Besides, it's proper, if Margaret has some of your work to do to-day for your pleasure, that you should take some of hers another day; so if you still choose to go, mind you must not expect on Monday to have your share of the amusement."

Mrs. Aldridge thought this an admirable device for testing the motive of Winifride's desire, as well as an equitable arrangement any how. It is to be feared, however, that, half unknown to herself, there was a grain of unloving suspiciousness concerning Winifride lurking in her heart. Was it possible that such a good woman as Mrs. Aldridge could deliberately wish to discover some fault in the poor girl? Assuredly not. The wish was not deliberate; but it was able to lie concealed under the disguise of some good and plausible motive. As such, it escaped her observation even when she made her examination of conscience.

Mrs. Aldridge was not a spiritual or interior person. She made her daily vocal prayers, and went through her regular preparations for confession, examining herself upon the ten command-ments, the seven deadly sins, and the precepts of the Church. She gave a stated time to preparing herself also for communion, making the acts, and reciting the prayers contained in her Book of Devotion; but of meditation she had not a notion, and was a stranger to mental prayer. And who can be an interior person without mental prayer? Who can know the abyss of his own nothingness without mental prayer? Who can find room for the love of Jesus in this narrow little heart of ours till he has emptied it of self? "One deep calls to another:" the depth of our humility calls to the height of heaven. As God created the material world out of nothing, so, to rear His spiritual creation in our soul, He requires nothingness again that voluntary nothingness into which we sink when we see ourselves as we are by the light of His grace. Even when she received communion, Mrs. Aldridge unconsciously frustrated much of its gracious effects by not retiring into herself, to converse with her Lord present within her. She opened her book the moment she returned to her place, and went through her prayers with attention and seriousness; but, oh! what secrets of His love may be lost by those who think more of their prayers than of Him, the spouse of their souls, who is visiting them at that time after such an ineffable manner! Far be it from me to say any thing against the devout and proper use of books, which are so great a help to many a pious soul; but that which is a help when used in moderation, may, by its exclusive employment, become a fetter. Crutches are intended to be a help for legs, not a substitute

for them; and he who should so depend upon crutches as to lose thereby the use of his legs, would surely make but a bad exchange.

Mrs. Aldridge walked, as it may be seen, in a widely different path to that in which Winifride trod. This poor humble girl was indeed an interior person, and lived, unknown to herself, in an almost continual state of mental prayer, ignorant though she was of its rules and of its very name. It is not learning, it is not talent, it is not acuteness of mind or subtlety of intellect, which is required to raise the soul to a high spiritual state. To know ourselves, and to know God, this is the whole secret; for to know ourselves is to despise ourselves, and to know God is to love Him; and this double knowledge He is ready to impart to the simplest and most ignorant soul. The only obstacle in the way is our will. If we give Him that, He will do all the rest.

To return, however, from this little digression, which I entered upon to explain the fact of Mrs. Aldridge's not detecting her uncharitably suspicious temper towards Winifride. The latter gladly accepted the terms offered her; and after receiving directions from Mrs. Aldridge to leave a parcel for her at a shop before proceeding to Grassover, and to be home by a stated hour, Mrs. Aldridge retired to her own bed-room, an airy apartment at the top of the house, to finish a new gown which she was making for herself.

Meantime Margaret had heard that Winifride was to go to Grassover that afternoon, and was well contented with the arrangement, as her own amusement on Monday was to be prolonged in consequence. She was also eager to send her answer immediately to the housemaid at Mr. Laycock's, being particularly desirous to be civil in that quarter, and show a willingness to accept the invitation, even if unable, after all, to keep her engagement; and as the house, which stood without the town, was very little out of Winifride's way, she requested the latter to leave the letter for her at the door. An unexpected obstacle, however, occurred on the part of Winifride. She was in the conscientious habit of never going any where unless she was sent, or had received permission to go.

"I must ask Mrs. Aldridge's leave," was her

disconcerting reply.

Margaret was sufficiently acquainted with the girl's impracticable nature not to think of arguing the point with her; her only chance lay in deceiving her. "Nonsense," she said; "Mrs. Aldridge has just gone out" (she asserted this on a venture); "besides, I know she has no objection."

The simple and artless Winifride believed that Margaret had asked permission, and, satisfied on this point, willingly promised to leave the letter. Margaret saw that she so understood her answer, but took care not to undeceive her. "What could it signify," she said to herself, "whether Winifride took these few steps out of her way or not? and why need Mrs. Aldridge care?" Very true, Margaret; but you did not say, "Mrs. Aldridge need have no objection," but "Mrs. Aldridge has no objection."

Meanwhile Mrs. Aldridge was sitting working away at her new gown in her own apartment. It was a fine still autumn day, and she had thrown the window open to enjoy both the air and the prospect more fully. The said window was in the side of the house that was turned towards the country, and commanded an extensive view. The nearest feature which caught your eye in the land-scape was the common, upon a portion of which the fair was about to be held the next week, the preparations being already visible to the right of the London road, which passed across its centre. On the left-hand side a piece was, as it were, taken out of the common by the grounds of Mr. Laycock's house, a wine-merchant in Southwell, and considered about the richest man in the place. It was the London road which passed both Mr. Barnard's door and Mr. Laycock's gate; but the cross-road which led to Grassover branched off to the left about a couple of hundred yards before you reached the latter.

Mrs. Aldridge had laid down her work upon her knees, about three-quarters of an hour after she had taken to this employment, and she was resting her eyes by looking out of the window, admiring at the same time the deep autumnal tints of the foliage in Mr. Laycock's grounds, now only awaiting the first frosts and rains to drop off the trees, —when her attention was attracted by the figure of a person walking along the London road. It greatly resembled Winifride, certainly; but it greatly resembled Winifride, certainly; but it Grassover. Yet how very like her! It was her height, her size, her walk. The colour of the shawl was the same; the bonnet was just like hers, too. Presently the individual stopped at Mr. Laycock's gate, and apparently entered; but

Mrs. Aldridge could scarcely see for the trees. She waited and watched, however, and a few minutes afterwards the same person came out again, and this time began to retrace her steps along the road. Her face was, therefore, turned towards her observer; and as she drew nearer, Mrs. Aldridge felt convinced that it was Winifride herself, and no other. Yet her conviction was not of that nature that she could conscientiously have given evidence to that effect in a court of justice. The distance was too great to be able to swear to a person's identity, and an intervening hedge soon concealed her; nevertheless Mrs. Aldridge felt pretty sure she was right; and if so, what was Winifride about? and under what pretence had she called at Mr. Laycock's? All those vague suspicions which, though founded on absolutely nothing but the personal repugnance to the poor girl she had so long harboured, now hastened to take a certain form. It was more credible that Winifride was after some mischief, because this idea fell in with her previous notions; and she did not stop to consider that those notions were grounded on nothing reasonable. "Ah!" she said to herself, "that girl is certainly deceitful, though she might seem to many too stupid to have any art in her. I have not been mistaken in her: I never liked those down looks."

Often did Mrs. Aldridge's thoughts recur to this suspicious incident during the afternoon. Had Winifride taken the opportunity to pay a gossiping visit, while the expedition to Grassover was a mere pretext? But she had not remained long enough to render this probable—though possibly, indeed,

she might not have found her friend at home. Then she remembered the conversation in the kitchen, which Winifride must also have overheard. Could the motive of her visit be curiosity

to see the gay stranger?

Meanwhile the innocent object of her suspicions was sitting listening attentively to Sister Mary Joseph's instructions, with that peculiar look which so mystified Mrs. Aldridge; a look which proceeded partly from a resolution she had taken to fix her eyes attentively on nothing external, except when necessary for her own immediate business, and partly because she habitually dwelt so much within herself, listening even to the words of others more as if within her heart, often only replying to them after a little inward communing, and always when any difficulty or temptation encountered her after a prayer.

After receiving from the kind nun advice as to her behaviour, both inward and outward, at that great act she was to accomplish the next morning, her first communion, Winifride raised her eyes to the clock which hung on the wall of the room where they sat, and saw that the time for her return was drawing near, and nothing would have tempted her to exceed by a minute. "I have a question to ask you, sister, before I go," said she. "Did our Lady look much at any thing or any body?"

"What put that thought into your mind, Wini-

fride?" replied the nun.

"I have seen, in all the pictures of her," answered Winifride, "that she is always looking at her blessed Infant, never at any thing else; and thought when He was away, she must have

somehow looked at Him still, and not taken notice of any thing else; and that put it into my mind that we ought always to be trying to look at

Jesus, and see nothing else."

"It is very true," said the nun; "Mary's eyes were ever turned to Jesus. She might truly say those beautiful words, 'My Beloved to me, and I to Him;' and that is what you must say inwardly when you receive Him to-morrow. No one was a more perfect example of keeping a watch over her eyes than the Mother of God; though she needed it not as we do, Winifride, to guard us from temptation."

"I was afraid, though," replied Winifride, "I might have done wrong; for I have been found fault with for not looking people in the face."

"We must do nothing unnecessarily singular," replied the nun. "You can be modest and reserved in your looks without attracting attention by any thing out of the way. There is a modest way of withdrawing our eyes, without appearing as if we had an objection to looking any one in the face. You must not be surprised if that displeases. But take heart, Winifride, and do not be discouraged if you should be blamed, even when you have meant to do well. You must expect to be a little awkward at first in the practice of virtues; and you must not feel injured if others notice this awkwardness, and perhaps mistake your motives. How can you blame them if they take a false impression, when you give a false one? Pass on, dear child; accept all with humility, and try and do better."

As Winifride walked home she repeated to her-

self again and again those mystical words, which seemed to speak to her soul more and deeper things than her understanding could fathom: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him."

"Where have you been, Winifride?" asked the housekeeper on her return.

"Where you said I might go, ma'am, and

where you sent me."

"Only there?" asked Mrs. Aldridge pointedly.
"Nowhere else," replied Winifride, who was

generally sparing of her words.

"Very well," replied Mrs. Aldridge, in a voice which seemed rather to mean the reverse; but she said no more. "Winifride has lied," she thought to herself; "but I will watch her, to find her out more fully before I let her know what I have discovered."





CHAPTER IX.

HAPPINESS AND PLEASURE.

Joseph to the girl, as she was about to leave the convent to return home, the nuns having kindly given her breakfast first, "Tell me what

occupied your heart most after receiving our dear

"O sister," replied Winifride, "I made a very bad communion, and I ought to be very sorry; but somehow or other I can't help feeling any thing but joy at this minute. And I ought to be thinking of how very sinful and unworthy I am; but I don't know how it is, but I can't think of any thing except Jesus, and His beauty, and His goodness, and His love."

"It is well to think of our sins," replied Sister Mary Joseph, "but it is better still to think of Jesus. You cannot think of His beauty and goodness and love, without feeling your own vileness and unworthiness. So as you feel your sinfulness and worthlessness, it is not necessary to think so

very much about it."

"That's a great comfort to me, dear sister, to hear you say so, for lately I have been afraid I thought too little about my sins. Somehow, I can't think long about them: I go off again to thinking of Him;" and Winifride was silent, forgetting that she had left the nun's question unanswered.

But Sister Mary Joseph had a holy curiosity to know how this simple, and, as she esteemed her, chosen soul, had occupied herself when receiving her God for the first time, and so she repeated her

question respecting her prayer.

"I don't think I prayed for any thing in particular," replied Winifride; "I forgot to do so, and I forgot, sister, to pray for you, which was very ungrateful of me; and after your asking me, too, to remember you in my prayers."
"Perhaps, my child, you felt a little bewil-

dered."

" No, I don't think I was," answered Winifride; "only one thought, you see, took me up the whole time, and I never got further, and so I forgot to

pray for you."

"If you had the intention of doing so before-hand," replied the nun, "you did in fact pray for me; God does not require that our prayers should always be shaped in words: He hears the desire of the heart. But what was your one thought?"

"You told me the other day," said Winifride,
"when you were explaining the mysteries of the
Rosary to me, that when our dear Lady came and offered her Son to God in His temple, she offered to Him the greatest gift that had ever been offered

or could be offered, and a gift as great as God Himself. And you told me yesterday, that, when I had received communion, I was to try and join my heart to hers in offering Jesus to His Father. Well, sister, that one thought took hold of me, that I had something to offer to God greater than every thing in the world, and greater than all His gifts and all His graces, and all He could give me except Himself, and as great as Himself too; and that so I had a right to ask every thing and any thing, and He could refuse me nothing. And so I seemed to stretch out my hands and claim every thing, all His treasures and all His love. I never got beyond that. Oh, so many things I ought to have thought of! I forgot them all."

"Do not distress yourself about that, my child," replied the sister, "your prayer was a good one. Farewell, and Jesus and Mary be with you!"

That day was indeed a happy day with Winifride. The joy, and the sweetness, and the perfume of that morning's banquet, of the heavenly manna she had received, tarried about her all the day long, and she noticed neither Mrs. Aldridge's increased coldness and severity of demeanour, nor Margaret's additional flightiness and excitability of manner, nor John's unusual surly silence, nor Mrs. Munt's customary flippant and gossiping talk. The sounds and sights around her struck her ear, but did not awaken her attention. The senses, as it were, slept while the heart was waking; yet she went through her work just as usual, and looked to the household she dwelt with the same plain, dull, stupid Winifride as usual.

There was one, however, who had learnt to

value the pearl hidden in a rough husk, who frequently saw and conversed with her, and who was rapidly advancing in the ways of God under the unconscious teaching of this ignorant girl. This was Louisa Leslie. The whole attitude of her soul had been reversed by acquaintance with this simple and favoured child of grace. Instead of being the subject of her own thoughts, as in some subtle way she had hitherto remained, even in the midst of her most pious exercises, God had become, and was becoming more and more, their object. She was beginning to learn how the love of Jesus takes us out of ourselves. She was beginning to imitate Mary more closely, and to look to her as the perfect mirror, in which is reflected the divine heart of her Son. Mrs. Leslie was a happier and a better woman than she had ever been, and Winifride was her teacher.

Sunday had been a day of happiness to Winifride. Monday was to be a day of pleasure to Margaret, to John, and to Mrs. Munt; for Mrs. Munt was to go to the fair also, Mrs. Leslie having engaged to take charge of the baby, with Winifride's assistance, during the nurse's absence; and glad she was of every opportunity of more closely observing her whom she loved to think of as her guardian angel's present to her. I do not mean to take you to the fair with our three friends; but as I gave you a little insight into Winifride's state of mind after receiving Him who was the joy of her soul, we must also take a glance at this trio after drinking their cup of pleasure.

They came back just a little too late, and had

to run to be back even then. Strange it is that the last five or ten minutes should be so much

valued, since they can be so little enjoyed.

"Well, to be sure!" said Margaret, when she had recovered breath enough to speak, her face looking very red, and twice its usual size, to the great detriment of her beauty—" well, to be sure! there were a lot of fine things to be seen there."

" I don't think you saw much of them, at any rate," said John, who looked more discontented than ever; "you were taken up with the company, I think, more than with any thing else."

"Law, John, how disagreeable you are! Why the company's half the fun; such queer-looking people! Besides, I did look a great deal at some of the stalls, at any thing what took my fancy. When I was walking about with Mr. Karl Stett . . ."

"Stettin," said Mrs. Munt, pompously correct-

ing ber.

"Well, when I was walking about with Mr. Karl, he said he believed he'd never get me away from some of them."

A grunt from John.

"He is a very kind man is Mr. Stettin," observed Mrs. Munt; "and I am sure he took a pleasure in showing you all that was to be seen."

"Kind do you say?" asked Margaret, colouring still redder; "I think the kindness was to

himself as much as to me. Kind! I like that."

Mrs. Munt sucked in her lips, as if she would give the impression she was suppressing an involuntary smile.

"Kind, to be sure!" repeated Margaret.
"Well, I say he was kind," resumed Mr

Munt; "for when I told him you had never seen any thing of the sort before, and you had not got so very much time for it all, he said directly he'd take you round to every thing as was best worth seeing. That's the reason why he wouldn't let you loiter at them stalls, not to miss any thing."

"Well, really, that's too good!" exclaimed Margaret; "only I think I know a little better than that;" at the same time energetically settling the trimming of her bonnet, which she held in her hand, as if she would pull it off, and hardly knew what she was about.

"That's a good joke," interposed John, looking any thing but jocose; "and pray why could not I show Margaret about without that chap's help?"

"Don't be comparing of yourself, John, to people that's seen the world, because that's to be ridic'lous," replied Mrs. Munt. "Mr. Stettin's up to every thing in a minute. He's got such an eye, and such a method like about him. You know you'd have been a deal slower about it."

"That fellow's a deal too fast, I know," mut-

tered John.

Margaret, unable to restrain her vexation and ill-humour any longer, had flounced out of the room, while Mrs. Munt was making her panegyric of Karl's merits as a showman.

Certainly some change had come over Mrs. Munt, and it dated from a round of the booths which she had taken with the interesting courier. Each lady, in fact, had returned convinced that Karl was in love with her; a fact which was beginning to interfere, as may be seen, with their hitherto warm friendship.

Mrs. Munt was some fifteen years older than Margaret, and a good ten probably than the hero of the whiskers and studs. She had not, therefore, in the first instance, thought of him as a probable lover for herself; and her vanity had been satisfied with being able to claim and display a greater knowledge of the history and connexions of this remarkable personage than the circle round her possessed. But now things were changed. Karl's attentions were unmistakeable, at least so she thought; and it was with considerable satisfaction that she gave frequent glances that evening at her plump pink and white face and blue eyes in her mistress's looking-glass, over the head of the latter, as she was brushing her hair, and Mrs. Leslie was reading her book.

"Well, I don't care, any how," said John, rising and pushing away his chair, the remark being made half to himself and half to Winifride, when they remained the sole occupants of the

kitchen.

"You're tired, John, I think," said the latter.
"Tired! I should think so!" exclaimed John; " and who would not be tired, and provoked too, at seeing such goings-on as I have to-day."

"It takes away one's pleasure at them sort of places," replied Winifride; "one can't help thinking how God is displeased so often; people drink-

ing, and swearing, and such-like."

"You're better than me,-a deal better, Winifride," said John; "I didn't mean that. I am afraid I'd have been amused all the same, if I hadn't been with those as provoked me beyond bearing. I tell you, Winifride, those women are making a fool of that fellow; and he would be making fools of them, only that they are fools already, and can't be made worse."

"Don't talk so, John; I don't like to hear it."

"Talk! I can't help talking. Why, there was
Margaret giggling like a goose, arm in arm with
that discreditable chap, and no eyes or ears for any body but him."

"John, you're talking ill-naturedly; you know what a treat it was to Margaret, and that she'd

never seen a fair before."

"That's all very well for you to be a taking her part, but I tell you she behaved as no young woman ought to. You would not have behaved so, Winifride, I know. Margaret's very unlike you, Winifride."

"No two people is like," said Winifride; "but I've no time to stay talking, and I am sure you'd better be going about your business, John, and think no more of all this." So saying, she hastily left the kitchen.

The moment would have been a favourable one for cultivating John's returning affection, by merely kindly listening to his complaints. She might even have deceived herself with the notion that charity was her motive; for an attempted justification of Margaret might have seemed so, while at that minute it could only have resulted in the setting herself off to advantage; but no sooner did she perceive this than she refrained from pursuing it any further, and broke off a conversation of which she saw the tendency. Her own natural disposition would have made her shrink from profiting by such an opportunity; but she was so habituated to act from divine motives, that they superseded nature and suggested themselves first, thus sanctifying and rendering meritorious her every action, while they gave wings to her feet to fly from the very shadow of temptation. As the world would have had it, she had thrown away a chance.

John felt he had been snubbed, and remained discontented alike with his old and with his new love; but Winifride departed with the blessing of God, which is better than the favour of man.





CHAPTER X.

THE DISCOVERY.

RS. ALDRIDGE'S new gown was finished and tried on, and hung up upon a peg on her door, ready to be worn. There it remained all Tuesday morning, to get the creases out; for it was to figure for the first time that afternoon, when its owner was engaged to drink tea with three or four old cronies of hers. That day had been settled with a view to her especial convenience, as Mr. and Mrs. Barnard and their daughter were to dine with a friend in the country. Mrs. Leslie had seemed somewhat better the last few days; and it was hoped this little change, as the weather was fine, would be beneficial to her. Mrs. Aldridge's services as cook were not therefore required on this day; so she was free to take her own pleasure. What good news was this to Margaret! No leave need be asked. She would slip out after the housekeeper had taken her departure, and be back before her return. It was also good news to Mrs. Munt, who was determined not to let her rival have the field all to herself. In the absence of Mrs. Leslie and of Mrs. Aldridge, who would

have been as great an impediment as the former, she could go to tea at Mr. Laycock's, taking little Arthur with her. It could do the child no harm,

and he was too young to tell tales.

It was with some surprise that Winifride saw Margaret about to sally forth in her best bonnet, and her face radiant with anticipated enjoyment, some little time after Mrs. Aldridge had left the house. Margaret thought it better to offer some explanation. "My mother," she said, "has been very unwell lately, and I am just running there to see how she is to-day."

The gay bonnet and smiling face seemed hardly to accord with a visit to a sick parent; but Winifride was not inquisitive, and thought it very natural that Margaret should have obtained permission to go and see her mother on an afternoon when she could not possibly be wanted. Winifride had the house to herself, as John was driving the carriage; and more so even than she imagined, as she supposed Mrs. Munt to be upstairs with the

baby.

Time never hung heavily on her hands. She generally found some work to do; and besides that, her crucifix, her little image of Mary, the gift of Mrs. Leslie, and her sacred prints, were books to her, and spoke more to her heart than books do to many readers, who find in them merely something wherewith to cheat their idleness-something to supply a succession and variety of ideas, which they are unable to draw from their own minds. The craving necessity for a multitude of ideas is no proof of thoughtfulness. To be able to dwell upon one simple idea for a considerable time, and to feed upon it, as it were, bespeaks more true richness in the mind than the capability and facility of passing rapidly from one intellectual notion or image to another. Winifride possessed not the latter gift, but the former was hers in a pre-eminent degree.

When tea-time came, Mrs. Munt did not make her appearance, which, however, was no matter of surprise to Winifride, as she occasionally drank tea by herself in baby's room, and was very likely to have done so when there was no company to be had below except Winifride's. By and by, however, the latter thought she had better go and find out if Mrs. Munt wanted any thing.

She found the room empty; so the girl proceeded to her work; but upon returning to Mrs. Leslie's room, and while occupied in arranging her bed for the night, she heard Mrs. Munt moving about in the adjoining apartment. She knocked at the door, and there seemed to be some little bustle before she was admitted. Mrs. Munt looked cross and heated, and her bonnet and shawl, lying on her bed, were only partially concealed by a blanket thrown over them. Baby was crying in his cot.

"What should I want?" she replied, in answer to Winifride's question. "You've disturbed baby, don't you see?" She then added, "Have you been up here before?"

"Yes," replied Winifride, " about half an hour ago."

"Oh, I had taken baby down to the drawing-room. Mrs. Leslie said it would be a change for

Winifride, as I have said, was not curious, and it was no business of hers; so she went away, and made no reflection upon Mrs. Munt's lame account of herself, which the latter only volunteered lest the girl's suspicions should have been aroused.

An hour or two later the carriage returned with its occupants. Still, as the evening wore on, no Margaret made her appearance, and Winifride began to be afraid she had found her mother very ill. The next arrival was Mrs. Aldridge, holding her petticoats up very carefully, and her gown turned inside out; for it had just begun, most inopportunely, to rain.

"Are the ladies come home?"

"Yes, ma'am, just now, and gone to bed. Missis and Mrs. Leslie was tired."

"Here, take this umbrella, Winifride. I'm afraid I'm very wet. Dear me, how vexatious! I must go and get it off directly, so I shan't come down again. Lock and bar the door, Winifride, before you go to bed. No, I don't want any thing," seeing the latter about to speak, and guessing at what she was going to say. Mrs. Aldridge hurried off, too much occupied with anxiety to repair the damage inflicted on her new gown to attend to any thing else; and Winifride remained with the umbrella in her hand, wondering what she had better do.

Her first impulse had been to mention Margaret's absence, and her fears that her mother's illness had detained her; but Mrs. Aldridge had not given her time, and now that she came to reflect, she doubted whether any way she would not have been displeased at Margaret's being out so late §.

and the suspicion forced itself even upon Winifride's unsuspicious mind, that the former had perhaps availed herself of the housekeeper's being out to prolong her visit beyond permitted limits, though she never supposed that she had gone without It was so very like Margaret to take such an advantage, that it was impossible the idea should not occur. If so, Winifride, while blaming it, was unwilling to be the one to tell of her. Did not Sister Mary Joseph charge her to be very careful to speak no harm of Margaret, even where she might innocently have done so of another? Whether this might not be a different case to any the nun contemplated, Winifride, at all events, had not the discrimination to perceive. Margaret must come home soon. She would be able, very likely, to give a satisfactory account of herself; and Winifride would then be glad that she had not roused Mrs. Aldridge's anger against her.

Quarter of an hour—half an hour—an hour passed, however, and no Margaret. The rain was still falling heavily; but as Winifride listened, she thought she heard the sound of voices. She opened the front door, and the distant noise of uproarious merriment from the fair met her ear. Still there seemed to be the sound of voices upon the road much nearer, and of persons approaching. The rain beat in, so Winifride, closing the door, returned for her shawl, which was in the kitchen. Wrapping this round her, she again took her post to listen at the front door, determining that when she heard the church-clock strike eleven, she would go and tell Mrs. Aldridge if Margaret had not arrived. The voices drew nearer, and she

heard steps. It was a woman's voice, in conversation apparently with a man. Presently they stood still, and then the voices ceased. She heard a retreating step along the road, and the hurried paces of another person approaching the door. It was Margaret; and as she entered the little gate the clock struck eleven. Winifride came outside the door to beckon her in, for she was about to run round to the back of the house, not seeing her.

"What is the matter, Margaret? What makes you so late?"

"Is Mrs. Aldridge come home?" asked the lat-

ter eagerly.

"Yes," replied Winifride, "and gone to bed; every one's in bed; and I was so frightened about your not coming back, that I was just a going up to tell her. She went to bed in a hurry when she came in an hour since; and as I thought you'd be coming every minute, I had not liked to disturb her."

"Thank you, thank you, Winifride," exclaimed Margaret, whose alarm, and agreeable relief from it, had suspended her pride; "that was very good of you, not to tell."

"Very good?" said Winifride. "I did not mean to hide any thing; I did not know there was any thing to hide."

"No more there is," said Margaret, recollecting "I could not help it. It was other people's fault, not mine: they deceived me about the hour."

"But you'll tell Mrs. Aldridge, won't you, tomorrow?" asked Winifride.

"Why should I, only to get a scolding, and when I don't deserve one?" replied Margaret; "and perhaps she would not believe me besides, and I'd lose my place. If you go and tell, Winifride, it will be very ill-natured of you."

"I am not a going to tell," replied Winifride, recoiling from the idea of being ill-natured to Margaret. "If she asks no questions," she added, however; "for you know, if she does, I must

say the truth."

"How should she ask questions when she knows nothing about it?" answered Margaret, re-assured by what she took as a conditional promise of secrecy; and taking off her shoes, that she might make no noise going up stairs, she slipped off to her bedroom, charging Winifride to be very quiet.

The latter soon followed. Her room was a very diminutive attic, with just space enough to contain her small bed, wash-stand, and chest of drawers, which she had converted into a little altar; but the smallness of the room was a great boon to Winifride, as it secured to her the undivided possession of it. Perceiving that her shawl was very wet, she did not like to fold it and put it by, but hung it up upon a nail outside her door to dry. Then, after performing her evening devotions, and begging our dear Lady's blessing and that of her good angel, she laid herself down on her bed, and with the crucifix hanging above her head, and her hands crossed upon her bosom, she slept ere yet the holy water had dried upon her brow.

Mrs. Aldridge had gone up early to her room, but had not been in bed so very early. A consi-

derable time was spent in dabbing her new silk gown with a pocket-handkerchief, to efface, if possible, the marks of the drops of rain; and then there were sundry other little arrangements to make, which lengthened out the time, so that she was not in bed till a few minutes before eleven. Scarcely had she lain down than her attention was attracted by a slight sound. She sat up and listened, and heard voices along the road-probably people returning from the fair. She was just going to lie down again when the same sound re-curred, and appeared to her to proceed from the front door. Mrs. Aldridge was greatly afraid of thieves; and the knowledge that the fair must have attracted many bad characters to the neighbourhood added to her alarm. She rose, put on her dressing-gown, and pulling aside the blind of the window which faced the front of the house (for the two windows of her room were in different sides of the room), looked out attentively into the darkness. Little was visible; for though there was a moon that night, the heavens were covered with clouds, and it rained fast. Presently, however, objects became a little clearer to her; she could see the garden-railing and the little gate; and while her eyes were fixed on it, it opened, and the figure of some one, apparently a woman, passed rapidly along the gravel-walk. It paused for a moment, and then came up towards the front door; but the balcony of the drawing-room concealed it now from her view. Immediately after she heard distinctly the front door closed very gently.

It was while Mrs. Aldridge was fidgetting about

her room for her lucifer-box, and finding every thing under her hand except the one thing she was in search of, that the shoeless Margaret effected her escape to her room unheard. Mrs. Aldridge has at last found the box, and is now proceeding to feel about for her flat candlestick, when steps are heard on the staircase. There is no mistaking Winifride's tread; her shoes always creak; besides, who could it be but Winifride? and that is her room-door which she is now closing.

"Ah, the deceitful girl!" said Mrs. Aldridge, as she lighted her candle; "I see through it all now."

Her first impulse was to go to Winifride's room, and tax her with her conduct; but when she had reached the door, she considered whether it might not be as well to wait till the next morning. The room was over Mrs. Leslie's, and the noise of voices might disturb her. While she was making these reflections, she observed the shawl hanging upon the door; she took hold of it, and if proof had been lacking, its wet condition bore testimony against its owner. Mrs. Aldridge nodded her head with a species of satisfaction. The accumulation of evidence was quite a relief to her mind; she had traced her suspicions home at last to a certainty, and she could now persuade herself that her evil opinion of Winifride was grounded upon reason, and not the result of uncharitableness. The careful housekeeper then crept down stairs to see that all was safe, and that the girl had not neglected in her haste to bolt and bar the door; and finding all in proper order, she returned with the same

stealthy pace to her bed again, and fell asleep while in the act of concocting a pompous speech, announcing the unpleasant events of the night, to be delivered to Mrs. Barnard on the following morning.





CHAPTER XI.

THE SECRET.

HEN I tell you, Winifride, that you were seen last night, and that I have informed my mistress, as I was in duty bound, of your very improper conduct, you will not be surprised to

hear that she has desired me to tell you that she must part with you. I would advise you, as a friend, to tell me exactly where you went, and what you were about, as my lady must be satisfied on that head before she allows you to stay on your month."

Winifride remained silent when Mrs. Aldridge had finished this speech, of which her portentous manner, during the whole morning, had given a note of warning; a warning, however, which had conveyed no preparation to one who was innocent of any conscious offence.

The colour mounted to her face, and her heart beat violently. She could only say, "Jesus, Mary!" to herself; for her ideas were all in confusion, and she knew not what to reply.

"You have, of course, nothing, you can have nothing to say in excuse for yourself," resumed the housekeeper, all starch and propriety; "but you have something to say in explanation, which I must require of you. Where did you go, and what were you about, when you left the house last night, with no regard to your own character or our safety?"

" I went nowhere," said Winifride.

"How can you tell me such a lie? I saw you with my own eyes come in at the garden-gate; I heard the door of the front hall shut; I heard you come up to your room. Perhaps you will deny that your shawl was soaking wet?"

"My shawl was wet, I know," replied Winifride.

"And yet you deny that you were out?"

"I went outside the door for a minute," answered Winifride.

"And you think I am to be put off with such an excuse as that? Let me tell you, I have eyes as well as ears. I have seen you oftener than you have supposed. You are a deceitful girl, and I have thought so for some time. You know quite well that you asked permission to go to Grassover the other day, with another object in view, and your pretended indifference to the fair was all sham. I dare say you took advantage of my absence to go there yesterday afternoon, and that is bad enough; but for a young woman to slip out at night by herself, all unprotected, and to go to such a place!"——Mrs. Aldridge held up her hands in horror, unable to think of an adequate conclusion.

"Oh, no, no," exclaimed Winifride, "I never did such a thing; indeed, I didn't."

"Then where else did you go?" asked Mrs. Ald-

ridge, "that is what I want to know; and where could you in fact go with any propriety at such an hour?"

"I went nowhere," repeated Winifride, relapsing into her passive state, out of which the accusation of going to the fair at night had drawn her for an instant.

"Well," rejoined Mrs. Aldridge, "I can only tell you that I don't believe you. How should I, since I saw you? However, I leave you to think better of it. Depend upon it, Winifride, a true and candid confession of your fault will be your best and wisest course. I shall speak to you again by and by;" and Mrs. Aldridge sailed loftily away.

"Don't tell of me, O dear Winifride, don't tell of me," said Margaret, clinging to her in a passion

of tears.

Winifride had retired to her room, where she was seeking counsel and support at the foot of her crucifix, and Margaret had followed her there.

"But how can you bear, Margaret, not to tell

of yourself?"

"Oh! there are reasons—there are reasons I can't explain to you; but you don't know what

the consequences would be to me."

"I can't fancy any reasons being good ones that keep one from telling the truth, Margaret; and when another person is accused too," replied Winifride, and the tears came into the poor girl's eyes.

"You shan't suffer for it in the end, Winifride, indeed you shan't; it's only for a few days, and then I'll tell, and set all straight; and by and by,

you don't know but I'll be able to show you how grateful I am. But if you tell, you'll do me great harm, and yourself no good, you may be sure."

"Make me no promises, make me no threats, Margaret," rejoined Winifride gravely; "they are nothing to me—nothing at all. I could save my character by one word" (her voice faltered a little), "and if I don't do so, it is not for any thing you or all the world could offer or threaten me with."

"Then why?" asked Margaret, looking at her

with surprise.

"Why?" said Winifride, as she sunk on her knees before her crucifix, "because I believe my Lord wishes me to suffer; because Mary never justified herself; because it pleases the Heart of Jesus that I should bear this in silence."

Margaret gazed in astonishment at the impassioned countenance of the girl whom she had deemed stupid and devoid of feeling, as, with her hands clasped and her eyes fixed on Jesus crucified, she seemed all transformed into the love of Him, and forgetful of aught else besides. Margaret's tears burst forth again; but she hurried from the room, for had she remained she must have knelt also and have repented. Her feelings said yes, but her will said no.

As Winifride would not depart from her first assertion, "I went nowhere," she would have been sent away at once by Mrs. Barnard, who was only too willing, as we have seen, to part with her, even before any serious fault could be laid to her charge, had it not been that she feared to grieve her daughter by any harsh measure. Mrs. Leslie

had caught cold coming home from the dinner-

party, and felt very weak and nervous.

"My poor daughter," said Mrs. Barnard to the housekeeper, "has taken such an interest, I can't tell why, in that worthless girl, that she will be vexed, I know, if we send her off at once as she deserves. Indeed, it would be best to say nothing to Mrs. Leslie at all about it just now; only I'm afraid she'll be having Winifride up, and hearing something of it from her."

"Oh, ma'am," replied Mrs. Aldridge, "no fear of that. Winifride is so close, she'll never say one word of it. She's a strange girl, and will not open her lips to excuse herself, any more than she will to tell the truth. That's what I never liked about her; only you see, ma'am, one don't like to be

uncharitable."

Winifride, then, had a month's warning given her; and, as it may be supposed, the time did not pass very pleasantly. Two circumstances, however, tended to turn attention away from her: one was Mrs. Leslie's daily declining health, and the other a piece of news which astonished, while it variously affected the different members of the kitchen circle.

Margaret was engaged to be married, and Mr. Karl Stettin was, to use a common expression, the fortunate man; or, to speak more correctly, according to the high estimation in which that individual was held, Margaret was rather the fortunate woman. Undoubtedly she considered herself as such, and not a little proud she was of her conquest; it was her vanity, indeed, that prevented her from keeping her engagement a secret, as she had promised to do.

The anticipated proposal was made some little time after the eventful night of the fair; but Mr. Karl informed his lady-love that he must go over to Switzerland to settle his affairs, and announce his approaching marriage to his relatives. He should return, however, in a very short time to claim her hand. In the mean while he begged the affair might be kept private; and Margaret promised,—what would she not have promised?—but to perform was rather more difficult. It was such a pleasure to triumph over Mrs. Munt, to astonish Mrs. Aldridge, and to show John she did not care two straws about him; for perhaps, poor man, he might have had some reason to think otherwise at the time that she had no other lover.

The engagement was, therefore, announced as a dead secret to all, and became the talk of the whole house. Mrs. Munt looked scornful and incredulous, and told every one by her manner, and Mrs. Aldridge, in private, in so many words, that she believed the girl fancied the proposal altogether. "Dear me!" she said, "those foreigners are so complimentary. If I had taken as earnest all that has been said to me,—only I am not quite so simple, and understand what all that means."

Mrs. Aldridge hoped he was not deceiving the poor girl; and if he was, that he'd be unmasked before the world. Mrs. Aldridge was very fine in her expressions when she had a topic.

John did not care as much as Margaret expected. He was more concerned about Winifride, and was the only one who persevered in saying he believed no harm of her.

Margaret had really intended, or had persuaded herself that she intended, to clear Winifride's character before the month had expired. Her terror lest her fault should be known in the first instance was from the fear of a dismissal before her love-affair had come to a satisfactory conclusion; but when once all was safe in that quarter, and her marriage about to take place, she would be able to explain what had happened without injury to herself; and so she still meant to do when Karl returned, which she hoped would be before Winifride was required to leave.

Meantime Mrs. Leslie, as I have already remarked, though not materially worse (so thought the doctors, or at least so they said), was more feeble and languishing than ever. She longed very much to see the priest oftener; but as none resided there, and as Father Musgrave only came occasionally to hear confessions, it was not easy for her to obtain what she wished. Whenever Mrs. Barnard went to confession, which was only once a month and at great festivals, she used to ask him to come and hear her daughter's confession, who was seldom able herself to go; and Mrs. Leslie knew that her mother would be greatly alarmed and annoyed if she were to ask to see him more frequently.

Mrs. Leslie was too fearful, in fact, of paining her mother, and she thus allowed a timid and fond human respect to step in between her and her soul's welfare. As the love of God, however, grew stronger in her heart, and her bodily health waxed feebler, she was forming the resolution to make some change in this matter, which was beginning to be insufferably painful to her. She still did not venture to say any thing to her mother; but she determined to ask Father Musgrave next time she saw him, to call if possible as often at least as he came to Southwell to hear confessions. She regretted that she had not said this on the last opportunity which had just occurred; and now she must wait a weary three weeks before she could have another. Alas, could she but have known the change that three short weeks would bring!





CHAPTER XII.

WHAT IS SIN?

MND so you did not engage that girl you mentioned," said Mr. Barnard to his wife, as he walked up and down the room while tea was preparing.

Mrs. Barnard scraped her throat significantly and muttered something indistinct.

"Is Margaret then going directly?" asked Mrs. Leslie.

Mrs. Barnard made a gesture of annoyance at the unconscious Mr. Barnard. "No, not directly," she said; "but it is as well to be on the look-out."

"Oh," rejoined Mr. Barnard, "I thought the servant you were inquiring about was to be in

Winifride's place."

"In Winifride's!" said his daughter, quickly; "I thought, mama, you promised that you would not part with Winifride till you heard of another situation for her."

"As your father has mentioned it, which I am sorry for, for I knew it would only set you fretting, Louisa, I must say that I cannot possibly keep Winifride any longer. She went out without leave, and at night. It is a thing I cannot

pass over. She will give no explanation of what she was about; but she cannot deny having been out, for her clothes were all wet; besides, Aldridge saw her coming in, and thinks she must have gone to the fair."

"Mama, have you questioned her yourself? I am sure Winifride is quite incapable of such conduct."

"Indeed I have not," replied Mrs. Barnard; "what was the necessity, when the thing is as clear and undeniable as it can be? Aldridge is quite satisfied, and so am I. You are far too confiding, my dear child. The girl is very unworthy of the kindness you have shown her; I should have sent her off at once after her indecorous conduct, but from the fear of distressing you, Louisa; and I now must entreat that you do not distress me by seeing her and speaking to her. It would only be exciting yourself for nothing, which is the worst thing for you."

"Louisa won't be such a goose as to excite herself about such nonsense, I should think," remarked her father. "Winifride will do very well, I have no doubt; better than she deserves. She will humbug that good priest of yours, I dare say, and he will get her another place. But come, Mary Anne," he added, addressing his wife, "you have never told me yet why you did not engage the servant you heard of, who lived with Mrs. Parker."

"Well," replied Mrs. Barnard, "I should have done so—for I had an excellent character of her for usefulness—but I observed an omission in Mrs. Parker's note, and a very important one; so I saw her myself, and questioned her; and then it came out very reluctantly, that she had been guilty of

an act of dishonesty."

"Bless my soul, Mary Anne!" exclaimed Mr. Barnard, as he subsided into his arm-chair at the tea-table, "what do you mean by an excellent character? and what did Mrs. Parker mean by recommending a dishonest servant?"

"I mean excellent as respected usefulness, and so on. The fact was, the dishonesty was not to any great amount: she had taken some tea. She confessed her fault when inquiries were made, and seemed very penitent. She said it was the first time she had ever done such a thing; and it appears she had taken it to give to her old father, who is at the union, where I think they keep them very short. Of course, I don't mean that that excused the act."

"I should think not," said Mr. Barnard, sip-

ping his good strong cup of tea.

"Certainly not," resumed his wife; "only it made Mrs. Parker feel more compassion for the girl: however, as it was a thing which she made a point, she said, of never forgiving, she was obliged to part with her, but should have been glad to get her a respectable situation."

"And foist her off on us!" said Mr. Barnard;

" that's a good joke."

"Poor girl!" said Mrs. Leslie, "since it was her first fault, and she seemed penitent, I wonder

Mrs. Parker did not forgive her."

"My dear Louisa," said her father, "I don't like to hear you talk such sentimental nonsense. You women think it pretty, I suppose, to say

those sort of things; but really, if I imagined you were serious, I should not think so well of you as I have hitherto done."

"I am quite serious, dear papa," replied Louisa.

"People will often shut their eyes to very great
sins in their servants, even mortal ones, merely
because they are valuable servants to them, and
what they do wrong does not affect the interests of
their employers; and here is a case where a servant is guilty of only a venial sin, and she is
parted with as a matter of course."

"A venial sin!" ejaculated Mr. Barnard; "that's

your Catholic morality!"

Mrs. Barnard began to look very uncomfortable,

and fidgetted the tea-cups about.

"You must recollect, papa," said Louisa, gently, "I use the word 'venial' not as perhaps you take it, in the sense of trifling, but, as we use it, to signify pardonable by God. A venial sin is one for which, though it offends Him, He does not withdraw the life of grace from the soul that commits it."

"And so theft is one of your pardonable sins!"

said Mr. Barnard, a little contemptuously.

"I did not say that," replied his daughter; "on the contrary, it is mortal, unless the value of what is taken be very small; and even then, if the theft be committed on a very poor person, it is still mortal."

"Pray don't let us have any discussion," said Mrs. Barnard in a deprecating tone; "I'm sure we all mean just the same thing really."

"I don't think we do," said Mr. Barnard, per-

tinaciously; " and I am very sure we don't."

"An argument is so bad for Louisa," rejoined Mrs. Barnard, imploringly; "it excites her, you know it does, Mr. Barnard."

"Louisa won't be excited, if you don't make a fuss about her, Mary Anne," said her husband; "besides, why is a little conversation to excite her? I'm sure she's looking uncommonly well this evening."

Mrs. Barnard had more discrimination in such matters than her husband, and she saw in Louisa's flushed cheek a sign of feverish excitement, rather than of health; however, she said no more, as she perceived it to be useless. There was a slight pause, and Mr. Barnard then resumed the subject which his wife's remark had interrupted.

"I say, even on your own showing, Louisa, yours is strange morality. Stealing is stealing, whether the value be great or small; and I do say that, with the exception, of course, of murder, there is no sin to be more reprobated, especially where the person guilty of it is so situated with reference to you that he has every facility for committing it with impunity. What is to become of human society if you are to endeavour, by extenuating such crimes, to weaken the barriers against vice? Human society rests in a great measure, I may say altogether, on the first principles of justice, honesty, and truth; on respect, in fact, for the rights of property. The laws of this land, though I allow they were too sanguinary, inasmuch as they precluded a due gradation in punishment, and subjected stealing to the same penalty as murder, were nevertheless, until of late years, a magnificent and severe protest in favour of this

truth; and so convinced am I of the necessity of such a protest in some form or other, that I should positively consider myself as guilty of a criminal weakness if I were to retain a servant in my service who had been guilty of the slightest act of pilfering or dishonesty. I should discharge him or her, for the interests of the community at large, no less than for my own."

"Dear papa, what would become of us, if God

were to deal thus rigidly with us?"

"That's it!" said Mr. Barnard; "women cannot reason, they can only feel; and so they run off from one point to another to justify their inconsistency. What have I to say to the judgments of God, and what do I know of them? We are placed here in the midst of human society, and have to deal with that; and it is our duty to cherish those virtues which conduce to its solidity and welfare, and to brand as infamous those vices which tend to dissolve or injure it;" and Mr. Barnard thumped his fist on the table to enforce his remark, causing all the tea-cups to jingle, and poor Louisa to start painfully.

Recovering herself, however, she replied, "I do not think, papa, that I have slipped away from my original position. Perhaps from the outset we have been viewing the whole thing from different points of view. I have been considering sin as it appears in God's sight,—you as it affects the temporal interests of society; and yet, looked upon even in this aspect, it seems to me that there are sins more destructive of the peace of society than attempts upon our property. Is not reputation more valuable than goods? What do you think

of malicious detraction, and other sins against charity? There can be no doubt that such sins, which we pass over very slightly, are often mortal in the sight of God. Suppose a person repeats what even may be true, to the disadvantage of another person's character, but which happened not to be known, and he tells it, not from any necessity or duty, but from a malicious feeling or detracting spirit,—such a sin is more hateful in God's sight than pilfering a little tea. The latter is certainly offensive to Him, but the former is far more so."

"Well, my dear Louisa, I am sure I can't go along with you at all," replied her father; " and so, if I tell some one an ill-natured story, you will be more shocked than if you heard I had picked a pocket? Come, Louisa, answer me that can-

didly."

"That is not the fair way to put it, my dear father," rejoined Louisa. "Stealing is not a temptation to which persons in our class of life are exposed; and every thing combines to make it appear shameful and despicable in our eyes; while we are tempted to be guilty of both calumny and detraction, and the same shame does not happen to attach to them. It would argue, therefore, that you had arrived at a very low pitch of moral degradation, if you, dear papa, were to pick a pocket, a much lower one than would be necessary in order to permit you to be guilty of malicious detraction. I was comparing the sins themselves, not forming a judgment of this or that person from the class of sins he falls into. You must allow that the humbler ranks are more exposed to the temptation of stealing than we are, and their asso-

ciations do not tend to inspire them with the same contempt and scorn of petty pilfering. This con-tempt and scorn are often quite sufficient to deter better-educated persons from it, without the slight-est real sense of its sinfulness. Without the pro-tection, then, of this feeling, fancy a servant witnessing abundance, luxury, and even waste around The small quantity which he is tempted to steal is not to be compared to that which he perhaps sees daily recklessly wasted by his master or mistress. The injury he inflicts, therefore, is small-scarcely appreciable, and the disgrace he has not been brought up to feel. I am not vindicating the act; whoever fears God knows it is a sin, and a sin of which Catholics think so much, that we believe restitution to be necessary in order to its forgiveness by God; but I do think that we, who are removed from the temptation of dishonesty in that particular form, ought to make compassionate allowance for those who are not, and in whom it is not perhaps a greater, or so great a sin, as many we frequently commit."

"Well, we shall never come to an agreement," replied her father, "so we may as well come to a conclusion; and my conclusion is this, that if any servant of mine is detected in stealing, be it only to the value of a penny, he or she leaves my house

that very day."

"I don't think we have any thieves in the house, Mr. Barnard, so I am sure we need not talk about it," interposed his wife; "and if you have finished, we had better have these things taken away."

Mr. Barnard rang the bell, and recommenced his

perambulations of the room. The bell was not answered, so it was rung again; and at last Winifride made her appearance, and proceeded to take

away the tea-things.

"Why does that clumsy two-fisted girl wait upon us instead of Margaret?" asked Mr. Barnard, when Winifride had made her final exit with the tray. "I am sure, to see her handling the things, I expect her to break half of them."

"My dear Louisa, had you not better go to bed? I am sure you are tired," said the anxious mother, fearing the introduction of a fresh topic

calculated to annoy her sick daughter.

Mrs. Leslie seemed inclined to acquiesce in this proposal, for the conversation had both excited and exhausted her. She was about to move, when Mr. Barnard paused in his tour of the room: "Come, that was a smash, at any rate," he suddenly observed.

"I don't think it was," replied Mrs. Barnard, who was desirous to avoid all further discussion, and get her daughter off quietly to bed. "I believe it was the tray knocking against the corner

as you turn down to the kitchen stairs."

Mr. Barnard's hearing had been more correct. An unfortunate accident had occurred, but Winifride was not the culprit. As she brought the tea-tray out of the drawing-room, she was met by Margaret, who had just come down from her bed-room, looking very red and far from pleased. She took the tray from Winifride, evidently in a very pettish humour, and the latter went up stairs, while Margaret, her head full of something else, hurried down carelessly with the tea-tray. The

fact was, Mrs. Aldridge had affronted her. When the bell rang the second time, the housekeeper got angry; Margaret was now constantly in her room, making her new clothes, or looking after her personal appearance, and consequently neglecting her business, and this fresh instance of inattention stirred up Mrs. Aldridge's spirit, who, dispatching Winifride to attend the drawing-room bell, bustled up stairs to administer a scolding to Margaret, who was in no humour, elated by her present prospects, to take reproofs very meekly. As she wished, however, to keep well with all parties till her lover returned to rescue her for ever from the toils of service and the mortifications of subordination, she checked the impertinent reply which arose to her lips, though not the feeling which prompted it, and which, therefore, found relief in abrupt and hurried movements. The consequence was that she knocked the tray sharply against the wall as she was about to descend the kitchen stairs. Its equilibrium was destroyed for a moment, and the cups and saucers, huddled to-gether towards the lowest side, forced out of its place a handsome cut-glass sugar-basin, which Winifride had omitted to replace in the tea-chest, and which, toppling over, fell, with its contents, on the stairs. Margaret hastily proceeded to carry the tray to the kitchen table, and returned, greatly alarmed, to pick up the sugar-basin, and ascertain the amount of injury done to it. Greatly to her surprise and delight, it appeared to have escaped unbroken, and she proceeded to collect a few scattered lumps of sugar, congratulating herself that no one was below to have observed the accident

when among them, to her dismay, she found a small piece of broken glass, a projecting knob of the ornamental part of the basin. It was a clean fracture, and when replaced in its original position, how easy it seemed to stick it on again!

Margaret had a cement up stairs, which joined glass or china almost invisibly; and so gathering up the sugar, and putting it in her pocket, she took the sugar-basin to her room, concealed under her apron; and as soon as the family had gone to bed she repaired to the drawing-room, after hastily transferring the sugar to the pocket of a gown hanging up in a cupboard in the pas-sage, where she and Winifride were allowed to keep their clothes. There, upon the remains of the fire, she warmed the cement, and stuck on the broken piece. It adhered admirably, and scarcely betrayed the joining; at least it was likely to escape notice for some time to come, which was quite sufficient for Margaret. All now that was required was to allow the cement to dry, but the night would suffice for that purpose; and so Margaret took it down to the kitchen, and placed it on one of the dressers, as if it had been brought down to be refilled. This she thought was the best plan, and least likely to draw attention. She would ask for the sugar the next morning, and take it up at breakfast-time; whereas, if the basin were seen down stairs with sugar in it, there would be questioning and complaining about its having been brought down at all. This, and no desire of appropriating the sugar to herself, was her reason for not restoring it; though it must be owned she considered it a matter of small importance whether

those few lumps (for they were but a few) were

replaced or not.

And so Margaret slipped quietly up to bed, congratulating herself on having repaired an accident, for which she considered Winifride as more to blame than herself.





CHAPTER XIII.

JUSTICE WITHOUT MERCY.

T was raining in torrents, and the weather only picked up for intervals of a quarter of an hour, and it then rained again full drive; but Mrs. Munt was determined to get as far as Mr. Lay-

cock's, and so she contrived to accomplish her purpose, as most people do when they have some object in view, and no obstacle greater than bad weather in their way.

She went, then, and she returned, and brought back a precious piece of news, well worth a wet-She had seen Elizabeth Duck; and, as a very profound secret, had told her that Margaret said that she was engaged to Mr. Karl Stettin, upon which Elizabeth Duck went into hysterics; for it appeared that she was under the same confident impression with respect to herself. Every one in Mr. Barnard's house was shortly made acquainted with this curious fact; but Mrs. Munt demurred a little as to what was to be done about mentioning it to Margaret, as, though maliciously glad of her discovery, she was a little ashamed of having to confess that she had betrayed the secret intrusted to her.

Meanwhile Mrs. Barnard was informed by Mrs. Aldridge of what Mrs. Munt had heard, and they were both of opinion that some measures ought to be taken to ascertain the real truth. Mr. Barnard was taken into the consultation, who only laughed at the affair, and was inclined to leave things alone, and "let the girls," as he said, "settle the matter between them. He'd be bound for it, the smart courier was taking them both in, and ten to one was at this very minute making love to some pretty Swiss girl."

"How very horrible!" exclaimed his wife; "how can you make so light of it, Mr. Barnard?"

"What would you have me do?" he replied; "would you have me run off to Switzerland to call the fellow to account, because my housemaid is a goose, as most women are, and believes all the non-sense people say to her?"

"Really, for the credit of our house, Mr. Barnard, you ought to be a little serious about it," replied Mrs. Barnard. "We have always endeavoured to have respectable servants, and this will

be the talk of the place."

"Dear papa," said Louisa, and her languid voice and pale face moved her father, who really loved her, not to refuse her request, "could you not inquire about this man's character from Mr. Laycock? The poor girl's happiness ought not to be trifled with."

"There are two poor girls in this case," replied her father, smiling; "and I fear we can't content them both: however, we will see what can be done. I am going to call upon Laycock on business this afternoon, so I'll ask him about this gay deceiver."

Mr. Barnard kept his promise, and came back with most unsatisfactory intelligence. It appeared that Mr. Karl Stettin had been dismissed from his situation; so that the story of the visit to his relatives was a fabrication. There had been no peace in the house while he remained. Mrs. Laycock's maid could not bear him; she said she saw through him from the first; but Mr. Laycock shrewdly suspected it was all jealousy, because, after their return from abroad, the fickle Mr. Karl had seemed to prefer the housemaid, Elizabeth Duck. The footman made common cause with the lady's maid, and hated Mr. Stettin with a good John Bull's hatred.

However, as he was a smart and useful servant, Mr. Laycock turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to all that was going on; when he one day received a letter from Switzerland, written by a gentleman at the request of a poor woman, who, it appeared, was Mr. Stettin's wife, who had only just discovered where he was, and wished to represent the destitute condition in which he had abandoned her and her two children. "So you see," he observed, "I could not for shame keep such a fellow as that, though I must own I was sorry to part with him. I had him up, however, showed him the letter, paid him his wages, and packed him off."

Mrs. Barnard was much shocked, and Louisa deeply pained, when they heard of the villany of the wretched man; and the latter was, perhaps, as deeply pained by observing that her father treated

it as a matter of much mirth; indeed, it seemed quite to have enlivened him, and he jocosely said, that it would furnish materials for a capital farce. "By the by, Louisa," he suddenly observed, "I heard something from Laycock of much more consequence than Mr. Stettin's flirtations; that nurse of yours—Munt—I fear is not to be trusted."

Louisa turned pale, and Mrs. Barnard eagerly

inquired what he meant.

"Why, upon my remarking that it was my daughter's nurse, and a friend of his servants, who had discovered this double engagement, Lay-cock said that it must have been her Mrs. Laycock saw leaving their house late one evening with a little child. She noticed her going out at the gate, and said if that was Mrs. Leslie's little boy, who was so delicate, she wondered she allowed her nurse to stay out so late with him, nearly dark as it was getting, and such a damp evening."

Poor Louisa was quite upset by this piece of information. She was an over-anxious mother, and her ill-health had increased her natural sensitiveness to a morbid degree. She had implicitly trusted Munt; and now the bare suspicion that her confidence had been misplaced, and that in a matter of such importance as her baby's health, caused such a revolution within her, that, considering her weak state, far weaker even than any round her would allow themselves to suspect, it will appear the less surprising that she was ready to faint at her father's abrupt communication.

Mrs. Barnard rang the bell, restoratives were applied, and Louisa shortly recovered herself; but she still looked so deadly pale, that her mother strongly urged her retiring at once to bed.

"My dear child," she said, "do compose yourself, and I will speak to Munt to-morrow, and ascertain the truth; only don't excite yourself, my love."

Louisa in a faint voice promised to leave all to her mother, - indeed she was in no state to do otherwise, - and when she attempted to rise, she sank back upon the sofa exhausted. She was therefore carried up stairs by her father, and her anxious mother would not leave her till she saw her laid in her bed-a bed from which she was destined never to arise. The next morning the doctor was sent for, who gave it as his opinion that there was, on the whole, no material change in the invalid's health, nor any cause that he could perceive for immediate alarm. He would send some draughts, and call again in the evening. Mrs. Barnard was re-assured by such comfort as Mr. Dibdin believed himself warranted to give; for some time past she had been obliged to look upon the absence of immediate danger as cause for thankfulness, and the utmost she could reasonably hope for. The doctor departed, recommending quiet for his patient; and poor Mrs. Barnard found some occupation for her anxious mind in watching for sounds, and sallying forth, when doors clapped, to remonstrate against the neglect of her injunctions.

"What is that dreadful noise up stairs, Aldridge, just over Mrs. Leslie's head?" she exclaimed an hour or two afterwards, on hearing a rustling to and fro of feet in the upper story,

and a kind of suppressed gasping apparently pro-

ceeding from one of the attics.

"Oh, ma'am," replied the housekeeper, looking all fuss and fluster, "it's that girl Margaret, who's in such a state; but we'll move her to another

room as quick as we can."

Poor Margaret had received the information communicated to her by Mrs. Aldridge concerning her lover at first with anger and incredulity. But as proofs were brought, and the whole matter was. clearly put before her, the letter Mr. Laycock had received, and the condemning fact that Karl had not denied the charge contained in it, and had been dismissed from his situation in consequence of the discovery of his infamous character, her spirit sank within her, and she went off in a kind of hysterical convulsion. Poor girl! she had treasured up all the prideand affections of her giddy heart in this idol of her imagination; she had laid out every sixpence she possessed, and had forestalled more than she possessed, to spend it on finery, that she might look worthy of this worthless lover of hers; and now, not only had her dream of happiness faded away in one instant, but disgrace, shame, and ridicule stared her in the face. Poor Margaret was truly to be pitied, and even Mrs. Munt pitied her after a fashion, and indeed cried uproariously, and made more noise than all the rest.

John was the most hard-hearted of the party. He said, "Margaret was a wukking of herself up into those 'stericks, he believed, and she ought to be only too glad to be rid of such a fellow." John had really a kind heart, though it had a plain and

roughish coat; but he had little patience with feminine follies and foibles.

Meantime Mrs. Aldridge, Mrs. Munt, and Winifride were using their best endeavours to bring Margaret to herself again; cold water on the face was tried, rubbing her arms and hands, burnt feathers held to the nose, and every other approved remedy on such occasions; but in vain. Mrs. Aldridge now remembered that she had a bottle of very strong salts somewhere. The somewhere was difficult to discover; she rummaged all her drawers unsuccessfully; still she was sure, and repeated her conviction, that "it must be somewhere;" so she continued her search in all probable places first, and next in all improbable places, and finally in the same places over again. Suddenly it struck her where it was, or at least might be. There was a little shelf at the top of a cupboard in the passage containing pegs for hanging up gowns or bonnets. On this shelf Mrs. Aldridge had been in the habit of stowing away a few common medicaments, occasionally found useful in the household, such as peppermint-drops, hartshorn and oil, and the like. Amongst this medical store she proceeded to seek her missing treasure. She goes on tip-toe, raising her arm as high as she can to feel among the bottles. Here it is; she grasps hold of it, and lowers her arm rapidly; but a hook in one of the gowns hanging up below the shelf has caught her sleeve; this abrupt movement gives it a jerk, and the peg, which had apparently been previously rather loose, gives way, and gown and peg fall to the ground, something hard at the same time rattling against the floor. Mrs. Aldridge picks up the gown, and looks down, but sees nothing else; she shakes the gown, there seems to be something in the pocket; she feels it outside, there is a collection of hard lumps of something within. And now she examines the inside; her suspicions are confirmed—it is sugar! And whose is the gown? there is no mistake about it; it is Winifride's. Winifride was known to be a liar already, and what else besides there is no saying; and now she is proved to be a thief! Winifride is a thief that is plain, as plain as evidence can make it. And what excuse has she to offer? what can she say in her defence? Nothing; she makes no excuse, she offers no defence. It is true, she did not know the sugar was there, and she says so; but there it is in the pocket of her own gown; the proof of her guilt is set before her eyes, and she meekly accepts in silence the accusation she has no means of disproving. Nay, she does more; she sees herself in the light in which she thinks that others have a right to regard her; she, as it were, takes the guilt upon herself that is laid to her charge, and it imparts to her whole countenance and air a look of humble shame and penitence. But how is this look misunderstood ! It tells against her; it is taken as a tacit confession of her sin. Her two observers, Mrs. Aldridge and Mrs. Munt—the former no less than the latter, however much in all respects morally and religiously her superior—are both incapable of understanding how innocence falsely accused could do otherwise than indignantly defend itself. Winifride's virtue was as much beyond their sight as it was out of their reach.

"Come in," said Mrs. Barnard's voice to a tap at the drawing-room door. She had just ascertained that her daughter had fallen asleep after taking her draught, and had come down, more satisfied in mind, to write a letter. "Nothing the matter, Aldridge, I hope?" she said, as the housekeeper entered the room.

"Nothing, ma'am; only if you were disengaged,

I should wish to speak a word to you."

"How is that poor girl, by the by?"

"Much the same, ma'am; she comes to herself for a minute, speaks incoherently, and then goes off again."

"Mr. Dibdin must see her this evening. Was

it that you came about?"

"No, ma'am, not exactly," and Mrs. Aldridge glanced towards Mr. Barnard, who was immersed in study over a large parchment-bound book, as if she feared to disturb him.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Barnard; "you won't interrupt him. It's nothing very particular, I

suppose."

Mrs. Aldridge with much preface, containing regret, indignation, surprise, distress, and a variety of other feelings, contrived at last to acquaint her mistress with the fact that Winifride had been detected in stealing some sugar.

Mrs. Barnard's exclamation roused Mr. Barnard's attention from his large book, and the

story had to be repeated for his benefit.

"Well, Aldridge," he said, "it's a very simple

case. I'll have no thieves inside my door. Let the girl be paid her wages, and sent off this very day."

"But are you sure, Aldridge," interposed Mrs.

Barnard, "that she really took it?"

"Why, Mary Anne, don't you hear it was found in her pocket? What more would you have? The article found on the culprit's person,—that's quite enough to convict, I should think. Seeing is believing. I dare say she denies taking it, so does every thief; but I should like to know how

it got there, if she did not take it."

"I can't say," resumed Mrs. Aldridge, "as she denies it altogether outright. She said she did not know how it came there, but that was all; and she looks very down-hearted and ashamed of herself. I can't think myself how ever she got at it. I keep the sugar locked up; I never give those girls lump-sugar for their tea; and Winifride don't wait on the drawing-room, so she has no opportunity of taking sugar upstairs."

"Ah! but she did wait on us the other evening," exclaimed Mr. Barnard; "and I'll be bound

for it, it was then she prigged the sugar."

"Very true, sir," replied Mrs. Aldridge, after a moment's reflection; "and if I remember rightly, it was the next morning I found the sugar-basin standing in the kitchen ready to be filled."

"Well," rejoined Mr. Barnard, addressing his wife, who looked distressed and melancholy, "I hope you are satisfied, Mary Anne, that the charge is fairly brought home. At any rate, I am quite satisfied; and you have my orders," he added, turning to the housekeeper, "to send the

young woman off this very day, the sooner the better."

Mrs. Barnard could say nothing. She supposed her husband to be right, though harshness was repugnant to her own feelings, when it came to the point. She contented herself, however, with charging Aldridge not to let Mrs. Leslie know what had occurred.

"I suppose," observed Mrs. Aldridge, still lingering at the door, "that Winifride had better go by this afternoon's coach to Farleigh, where she comes from."

Mrs. Barnard mutely appealed to Mr. Barnard for an opinion.

"She may go to the devil!" replied that gentleman, as he returned to his big book.

Mrs. Aldridge left the room, and Mrs. Barnard

ejaculated, "Oh, Mr. Barnard!"

And so Winifride's fate was settled, and she was forthwith acquainted with it. She made neither reply nor remonstrance. She clasped her sorrow as the cross of her Redeemer to her bosom. Embracing it for His love, and because presented by His hand, she desired to feel all its sharpness and its bitterness; and she did feel it, but, along with the suffering, a strange sweetness seemed to inundate her soul. Jesus was reckoned among thieves; and, out of His unmerited love to her, He had given her, as it were, a thorn out of His crown. Should she not press this dear gift to her heart, and wear it more joyfully in her bosom than if it were the softest and sweetest of roses? And, then, Jesus was silent when accused; and so she would be silent too, for the love of His uncomplaining passion, and for the sake of Mary's speechless sorrows. All these thoughts passed within her while packing her little box, though she formed them not into words, nor could she perhaps have ex-

plained them to any one.

As the day wore on, Mrs. Leslie fell into frequent fainting-fits, unaccompanied, however, with any suffering. The feverishness seemed to have subsided, and along with it much of her bodily discomfort; but her weakness was greatly increased. She was dying, in fact, though none knew it, herself included. Mrs. Aldridge, however, suspected it, and was communicating her opinion upon the subject to Mrs. Munt while Winifride was standing at one of the kitchen-dressers eating a scrap of dinner previous to her departure.

"I had a niece," observed the housekeeper,

"who went off just like that, when no one was expecting it. She was in a deep decline, but the doctors thought she would live on some time yet; and the day before she died, she said she felt better, and so calm, only she fainted very often, and dozed a great deal besides—and that's just what Mrs. Leslie does—and then she went into an unconscious state that evening, and never came to herself again before she died."

Mrs. Munt grumbled some remark which seemed to imply dissent. She appeared out of sorts. Her eyes were red, as if she had been crying, which was the truth, in short; for Mrs. Barnard had just been questioning her about her evening visit to Mr. Laycock's house; and though she had made the best defence of herself she could, yet she anti-cipated a dismissal in case of her present mistress's death, and possibly even in the event of her living.

But every word that Mrs. Aldridge uttered was eagerly listened to by Winifride, and went direct to her heart. Her own troubles were all forgotten; she saw nothing before her, she could think of nothing, but her dear mistress, as she loved to consider her, dying without the sacraments of the Church. Oh, something must be done for her, and that quickly! She laid down her knife and fork, and leaving her uncomfortable meal unfinished, she hurried up to her little bed-roomhers no longer, for she had now no place nor home. Her box had been already taken by John to the coach-office, but the image of Mary was still there. She had not liked to pack it with her clothes, for fear of its being broken; and so she took it in her arms, and tenderly embracing it,-"O Mary! my dear Mother!" she said, "do not let her die without the sacraments;" then folding her shawl round her, so as to cover the precious image, she hurried down stairs.

"Oh, you are going, Winifride, now," said Mrs. Aldridge, her feelings struggling between pity and a sense of the necessity of a cold disapprobation of manner. Having failed to cultivate a loving heart, Mrs. Aldridge felt some embarrassment as to how she ought to treat a sinner like poor Winifride. "You will have to wait half an hour at the coachoffice; but perhaps you are better gone. You can't feel very comfortable here—nor, indeed, I am sure, any where—till you change your life. I hope you will, Winifride: that's all I can say. Good bye!"

"Will you pray for me?" said Winifride, in a

sad but gentle voice.

"Indeed I will," replied Mrs. Aldridge quickly, her better and Catholic feelings awakened, as she extended her hand to the poor girl, which she had not previously offered.

Winifride thanked her, and hurried to the backdoor. There she found John waiting for her with a face of unfeigned concern. He held out both his hands to her, and clasped hers tight within his

while he looked earnestly in her face.

"Winifride," he said, "I know you are as innocent as that baby upstairs. I would not believe you could do any thing wrong, if all the world swore you had done it; and I've told them so, and I'll tell them so every day as I'm here; and that won't be long, I'm thinking. Oh, Winifride, I wish I could do any thing for you! Is there any thing I can do? Tell me."

A gleam of pure joy lighted up Winifride's

countenance as she listened to him.

"Yes, John, there is something you can do—something which will make me very happy. O John! you are not living as you ought to do, or as you once lived, and as you once taught me to do. Go to confession, John, without delay. You have never gone, I fear, since last Easter. It makes my heart very sad to think of it."

John dropped the hand he held, and cast down

his eyes.

"Yes, it is true," he said; "I've not been the same man since then. I will go, Winifride, I promise you. I've never been happy since I left my duties, and I've never done right since I began

thinking of that foolish Margaret more than of you, good, dear Winifride; but, Winifride, I never thought of her as I had thought, and as I do think,

of you."

"Good-bye, John," said Winifride, in a gentle and kind but serious voice. She turned, and was gone in a moment. John looked after her while in sight, and then returned into the house with a sad but yet a lightened heart.





CHAPTER XIV.

THE OFFERING.



at Grassover, and thither Winifride resolved to go at once; and so anxious was she to lose no time, that she would not even permit herself the de-

lay of going to the coach-office to give directions about her box; indeed, she put herself and her own situation completely on one side, and was all absorbed in the one object she had in view. She thought it, however, more prudent to go a little out of the way to call on an old woman who lived close to the chapel, and was employed to keep it clean, having also the charge of the priest's vestments. She might possibly know something about his movements; and if by chance he had come into Southwell, she would be sure to be acquainted with the fact.

Winifride had reason to rejoice that she had taken this precaution. Father Musgrave had called not long before for a book, and was now gone to see a sick person about three miles off, at a little hamlet known by the name of Dingley Dell.

"Would he return through Southwell?"

The old woman could not say. He might have some other call to make, which would take him

round another way.

Winifride lost not another moment. Her mind had not to be made up. She had one object-to find Father Musgrave; and distance, though it increased her difficulties, could not shake her steady purpose. It had now just struck two, and she hoped to reach Dingley Dell by three o'clock. The weather, which had cleared up a little at noon, was again very lowering and threatening; and as she left Southwell, and turned into the little cross road leading to the hamlet, a small drizzling rain began to fall, such as portends a regular wet evening. A cold raw wind accompanied the rain, and shook a thick shower of yellow leaves down into the deep mud of the very indifferent road along which Winifride was wending her way. The poor girl had no umbrella. She had been in the habit, while at Mr. Barnard's, of using an old discarded, ragged cotton one, which every one else would have been ashamed of. It might as well have been bestowed upon her when she left, but no one thought of it. Winifride, however, was not in the habit of pitying herself; so she trudged energetically on, saying Our Fathers and Hail Marys for Mrs. Leslie.

By the time she reached Dingley Dell she was fairly wet through, and the wind which penetrated her dripping clothes made them strike a chill to her rather than serve to protect her from the cold. No matter; she has found the cottage to which the old woman referred her, and Father Lusgrave himself at the door just about to mount

Her story is soon told. "Oh, Father Musgrave, Mrs. Leslie is dying, I am sure, and no one knows it. Pray call there as quick as you can on your way back to Grassover."

The priest asked a few more questions, and hastily mounted his horse. "My good girl," he said, "you must go in and dry your clothes, for

you are wet through."

"Never mind about me, Father Musgrave," replied Winifride; "only make haste." Then bethinking her of something, she turned again to say, "Please, sir, will you seem to come by accident, and say nothing about me? Mrs. Barnard does not know that Mrs. Leslie is so very bad, and she would be displeased at my taking on me to do this."

There was not much use in Winifride's attempting to dry her clothes—the case was too bad for that; besides, time pressed, and she had far to go for a night's lodging. And where was she to go? One place and one alone suggested itself to her; there she knew she would find a welcome and shelter for the night, and that was the convent at Grassover. She began at once to retrace her steps; for she must pass again through Southwell, there being no shorter road to Grassover. The wind had risen considerably, and was now in her face, while the rain fell thicker and heavier; this added greatly to the fatigue of walking; but Winifride was young, and had a fair amount of strength; and as for the distance, she had frequently walked as much and a good deal more than nine miles. The wind and driving rain, however, so far retarded her steps, that she was far longer returning than she had been going; besides, she had not the

same pressing motive for hurry.

And now she has reached Southwell, and traversed its one main thoroughfare, dignified, as in so many rural towns, by the name of High Street. The rain has driven every one in-doors, and she meets scarcely a soul; and now she has arrived at the skirts of the place, and is casting a wistful and furtive glance through the almost blinding rain at Mr. Barnard's house. What would she not have given to know what had passed, and what was passing there? But it must not be. She could only hope and trust, as most fervently she did, that our dear Mother, whose image she clasped to her bosom, was watching over, and caring for, and aiding her child in the hour of her death, as by so many touching pleas she had so often been invoked to do during life. Yes, dearest Mother, pray for us in the hour of our death. By all thy joys, by all thy sorrows, by all thy glory, by every drop of blood that flowed from the Sacred Heart, by every tear that fell from thy compassionate eyes, by every smile with which the infant Jesus gladdened those sweet eyes of thine in the grotto of Bethlehem, and by that ineffable love which is the crown wherewith the Son has crowned, and is for ever crowning, the Mother in heaven,-holy Mary, pray for us now and at the hour of our death!

The worst part of Winifride's journey was before her. She had not given it a thought, till the state of the road, when she had advanced about three quarters of a mile, furnished unmistakeable evidence of what must be the case further on. The road from Southwell to Grassover was a little cross-way; and as there was not much general traffic along it, a very serious grievance had existed for years—for how many there is no saying—without any remedy being applied. This consisted in a rapid stream which traversed the road, scanty upon ordinary occasions, but much swollen when heavy rains occurred, sometimes even laying it for a considerable space under water. It would have required some outlay of money to prevent the possibility of this inconvenience; but as the road was seldom flooded to such a depth as to hinder carts from passing along, the nuisance was put up with, and likely to be so for a long time to come.

Now when Winifride observed the wet condition of the road, which had begun to be covered with a nearly continuous chain of puddles, she recalled to her memory the almost incessant heavy rain of the last few days, and the probable result. She might have remembered this sooner, had her mind been less occupied, but in truth she could not allay the anxiety she felt, except by continued prayer, her resource on all occasions. The words of Mrs. Aldridge had conveyed a fearful doubt to her mind, as to whether, even if Father Musgrave arrived in time, he might not find Mrs. Leslie in a state of unconsciousness, from which possibly she might not revive. Oh! how sad that any one should be surrounded till death with every bodily comfort, alleviation, and assistance, and yet want that help which can alone truly benefit, and which the poorest and most desolate may receive at that hour in rich abundance!

Winifride was now at a stand-still. She could not tell how deep the water might be further on, at Ennesley Wash, as it was called; and though when you reach the bed of the stream which oc-cupied a depression in the road, there was a little raised wooden platform at the side for the convenience of foot-passengers, still there might be much awkward wading required before reaching that spot, and at any rate there was the option of another path by leaving the road. Winifride, however, had only crossed the fields once to Grassover, and having found that she gained no time by so doing, she had never repeated the experi-ment. As it was getting dusk then, she feared she might lose her way, especially as she must retrace her steps to some distance to find the gate through which you had to leave the cart-road. This made her hesitate; but the benumbed sensation which her wet clothes had begun to communicate to her limbs, decided her upon adopting this course; she turned back, found the gate, and entered the field. Here she discovered she had but exchanged wading for ploughing. The soil was a thick clay, and she floundered on with much fatigue, and a heavy load attached to each foot. Evening was closing in fast, and the desolate fields looked more gloomy than the road. Poor Winifride, struggling on against the driving wind and rain, with the additional drawback of the adhesive soil, began to feel rather lonely and unprotected; and when she had reached a stile beyond which a path led through some underwood, the thought occurred to her that she had mistaken her way. She paused a moment: but hearing loud voices near her, an undefined sense of dread hurried her on; she crossed the stile and pushed on fast along the path; the voices, apparently of two rude navvies, drew nearer; she quickened her pace, and stumbling upon the slippery path, had almost fallen.

"Hold up, young woman," said one of the men who had just overtaken her; while the other laughed, and asked her, "if her mother knew she was out?"

Winifride felt very grateful when they passed on and said no more. For worlds she would not have inquired her way of such as them; indeed, she was resolved at once to turn and regain the beaten road. She climbed the stile again, and was glad when she found herself back once more upon the common thoroughfare, even at the expense of so much lost time and additional fatigue.

On she went; and the water first covered her shoes, then reached her ancles, and then mounted nearly to her knees. Her petticoats, soaked and heavy, hung like lumps of lead about her; but there was no help for it. Cold and weary, and rather apprehensive from the increasing depth of the water and the darkness which was beginning to enshroud her, Winifride advanced, but it was now very slowly, which caution, indeed, would have recommended, had not the difficulty of progress become greater every moment. She has now arrived, at least so she believes, very near the summit of the dip in the road, the bottom of which forms the bed of the stream, and she stands still to listen ere she advances any further. A sound, as of the rushing of water, has been grow-

ing upon her ear for some time. At first she had fancied it was the wind moaning among the branches of the trees which lined the road; but there was no mistaking it now; it was the impetuous stream gurgling and chafing, and leaping along upon its headlong course. Winifride shivered, half from extreme cold and half from fear. Never had the rush of waters sounded so terrible in her ears; it seemed as if that cold, dark stream was going to bear her away, she knew not whither. However, she suppressed the unreasoning though far from groundless fear, which was laying hold of her mind, and making an act of confidence in the Divine mercy, and the protection of her dear Mother, she nerved herself to advance.

Extreme caution was necessary. It will be remembered that I mentioned a little wooden bridge for foot-passengers, which spanned the road at the point where the stream crossed it. To reach this bridge it was necessary to keep to the side of the road where a little raised causeway led to it; but then there was the danger, while attempting to place herself on a line with it, of falling into the ditch. Slowly, and feeling her way with her foot, Winifride stepped on; and now the diminishing depth of water shows her that she is beginning to leave the level of the road and walk along the embanked pathway. Soon the waters have altogether retreated, and she would have felt as if all danger was well nigh past, had it not been for the rushing noise of that dreadful stream, which filled her soul with a new and unusual terror. It seems to rush along with such bewildering haste, that she turns giddy, and feels as if it would drag her

from the causeway down into its cold bosom: here, however, is the little wooden bridge, and her foot

is upon it.

What a turmoil below! and is she really giddy, or do her senses deceive her? The plank seems all aslant under her feet, and is becoming more so at each step. Pass on quick, Winifride; for the posts have given way, from the violence of the stream, and your weight is accelerating the downfall of the fragile structure on which you are walking. Vainly she struggles to keep her balance till she attains the other side. The slipperiness of the wood and its increasing inclination are too much for her. She falls; but with her right-hand she clasps the plank, while her left-hand still embraces tightly the image of our Lady. There she hangs suspended over the waters. By a powerful exertion, she might even regain her footing, but that every effort she makes is dragging her support along with her, and only hastens the impending ruin. She must fall ere another minute has elapsed, and those fearful waters must be her grave. To her, however, they now appear only as the gate of eternity. Her natural and human terror is hushed and solemnised into the filial awe of a soul about to appear before its God. As there she hung between life and death, the church clock of Ennesley struck six. The wind blew in that direction, and clearly and sonorously it rang upon Winifride's ear. Oh, strangely and piercingly does such a sound speak to the ear at such a moment! Time is going on its deliberate and measured course, while to her it is closing for ever. The haunts of men and their cheerful firesides are near, and the tolling of that hour is, perhaps, to many but a summons to a social meal. Help, perhaps, is near too, if only her danger and distress were known; but no, such are not her thoughts; to her the church-clock seems to ring like the bell at the Elevation: it speaks to her of sacrifice.

She is called to make a sacrifice, the willing sacrifice of her life in union with that of Jesus. And, O blessed thought! our poor sacrifices can merit in virtue of that union. Yes, God will accept her life if she offers it, and He will give her what she asks in exchange. At that moment she heroically abandons it into His hands; she does not beseech Him to save it; she begs only, with all the fervour of her soul, that another may not die without the sacraments of holy Church; and she freely offers her life to obtain this for her. But what can impel her thus to be willing herself to die without those helps, that another may enjoy them? What but that charity which made an Apostle say, he "wished to be an anathema from Christ for his brethren!" Can such a sacrifice ever be rejected?—Scarcely had she offered up this prayer, and pronounced the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, when the crazy bridge gives way; Winifride falls along with it; and the waters close over her head.



CHAPTER XV.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES.



ATHER MUSGRAVE, after leaving Winifride at the door of the cottage at Dingley Dell, rode straight to Mr. Barnard's house, inquired for Mrs. Barnard, and was shown up to the

drawing-room. The latter made her appearance presently, but looked fussy, as if the arrival of a visitor, whoever he might be, was inopportune.

"I am sorry to hear," said the priest, "that

Mrs. Leslie is so unwell to-day."

"So unwell! who told you that?" asked Mrs.

Barnard, almost sharply.

"I understood as much from your servant John, who answered the door," replied Father

Musgrave.

"That is so like servants," rejoined Mrs. Barnard; "I have no patience with them; they always make the most of every thing. As for Aldridge, it quite drives me crazy to see her when any thing is the matter, looking as if she were ready to cry."

"And yet," replied the father, "this proceeds

from an affectionate heart and personal attachment, and must therefore be in a manner grati-

fying also."

"It is their way always," said Mrs. Barnard; they seem to luxuriate in the dolefuls, and to want to make one as uneasy as possible. Certainly Louisa is not well to-day, but nothing, Mr. Dibdin says, of any importance. She exerted herself too much in conversation yesterday evening, and was annoyed besides at hearing nurse had taken out baby late, and so to-day she is naturally suffering from all this, and has fainted several times. Servants think so much of that, "added Mrs. Barnard, returning to her first theme.

"Perhaps," observed Father Musgrave, after a slight pause, "as I am here, Mrs. Leslie might be glad to see me. I have called on my way back

to Grassover from Dingley Dell."

"Oh dear, no!" replied Mrs. Barnard quickly, "she is not at all fit to see any one you are extremely kind, but really she ought to be very quiet to-day In fact, she is so weak that conversation is out of the question; another day she will be very happy to see you, when convenient to you to call."

Another day! Oh, how cruel are the kindnesses of mere natural affection! and natural affection has overlaid and overgrown all other in this mother's heart.

"Another day, then," repeated the priest, almost sadly after her, as he rose to depart.

What could he do? he had no plea to urge for insisting upon seeing Mrs. Leslie. Mrs. Barnard quite cheered up when he proposed to move, and

even expressed her hopes that they should soon see him again.

"I must return now to my post," she said, as she followed him to the door; "I have had baby taken out of the next room to dear Louisa, lest he should disturb her by crying, and I have stationed myself there to keep all things quiet; sleep is of such consequence to her."

Father Musgrave made some species of civil recognition of having heard these domestic details, which claimed no actual reply, and taking his leave, descended the stairs. He mounted his horse, and paused a moment to reflect upon what was best to do. What if, after all, Winifride had allowed her fears to make her guilty of unconscious exaggeration? It might be so, and certainly the doctor's opinion was the most worthy of confidence. Still, doctors do not always tell the whole truth to anxious relatives; and as for Mrs. Barnard, she was full as likely to allow her hopes to blind her, as the servants were to be carried away by their fears. Besides, he could not forget Winifride's urgent tone of entreaty; and he felt unwilling at once to leave the neighbourhood. He would remain, therefore, in Southwell till later in the day, and would call once more to make inquiries when he should pass the gate. Having come to this resolution, he turned his horse's head again towards the chapel.

While these things were taking place, Mrs. Leslie lay in what her mother hoped was a comfortable and refreshing sleep, but in reality was a dreamy and disturbed slumber. At last she awoke suddenly, with a fearful sense of oppression; she seemed to have had some painful dream, but what it was she could not recall to mind, only those warning words of the son of Amos to king Ezechias rang in her ears: "Give charge concerning thy house; for thou shalt die, and not live." Yes, she was sure she had received some warning that the hour of her death was come; the truth had suddenly burst upon her; she was dying, and she knew it.

Making a faint effort to raise herself and draw aside the curtain of the bed, she found the exertion too much, and sank back again ready to faint. The slight sound, however, which she had made attracted her attendant's attention, and Mrs. Munt's countenance appeared peeping from behind the curtain.

"I wish . . ." said Mrs. Leslie; but the words, which were uttered with difficulty, died upon her lips. A parched sensation seemed to hinder her tongue from articulating, and she sank back in a half-unconscious state. Then followed a long blank, during which she was ignorant of all that occurred; but suddenly she revived, and along with returning consciousness came the same vivid conviction that her hours were numbered. Yet she did not dare to attempt to move or speak, lest the slight effort should again bring on one of those long swoons. Was it getting dusk, or were the shades of death gathering over her eyes, that all looked so dim around her? A very painful apprehension takes possession of her mind. She fears that she shall die without the sacraments of the Church. Her mother, she knows, will exclude the very idea of imminent danger as long as she possibly can; and she has not the strength to ask

for what others will not, perhaps, procure for her till it is too late. Add to this that she feels that she is herself to blame. Without in the least sharing her mother's coldness in religious matters, she had, from a criminal human respect, allowed herself to be habitually stinted to the proportion of spiritual nourishment which Mrs. Barnard judged sufficient for herself, and therefore proper also for her daughter. An over-indulged sensitiveness had led her into this error. Willingly would she have confessed and communicated oftener, but she had shrunk from surprising and distressing her mother. But was this to love Jesus as He deserves to be loved? Was it to love Him as the poor ignorant girl whom she once despised loved Him? Oh, no, no; it was cold, it was base ingratitude; she sees her fault in its true light now, and bitterly does she repent of it; but she is bearing, and must bear, the penalty of her sin.

A little after five Mr. Dibdin arrived. He found

A little after five Mr. Dibdin arrived. He found his patient in one of those death-like swoons which had become so frequent during the day. A great change had come over her since the morning. He saw at once how things were; not only was all hope at an end, but plainly she could not, in all probability, live many hours. It was as Mrs. Aldridge had anticipated, and she was sinking rapidly. Mr. Dibdin could only recommend such measures as might tend to prolong life for a brief span. Any thing more was beyond his skill, and he could but confess it. It is vain to describe the desolation of the poor mother. She would even then have endeavoured to extract a gleam of hope from what the doctor said; but he could find no excuse to

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give her the slightest encouragement. He could but mournfully reply that, humanly speaking, hope there was none, and he should but deceive her were he to allow her to suppose that he entertained any. Mrs. Barnard urged upon him his opinion given in the morning, as if she would perforce argue him into a hope for consistency's sake.

"Well, my dear madam," he replied; "but in the morning the case did not present the same distinctive symptoms, and I was not warranted in unnecessarily alarming you by mentioning possible contingencies. These things, my dear lady, are beyond our control, or even calculation; they baffle our scrutiny. I never, you may remember, concealed from you my opinion of the critical condition of Mrs. Leslie's health; but the latter stages of this treacherous malady vary indefinitely in rapidity; and I have known instances—"

Mrs. Barnard had not heard half he said. She was in no state to listen to a long speech, and here cut short the doctor's harangue, of which he was delivering himself with somewhat of a conventional concern in his countenance, mixed with professional pomposity, at the same time rubbing his hands in a circular manner, as if engaged in the

operation of soaping them.

"I should wish, Mr. Dibdin—not but that I am sure you have done all you can—but still—"

"To call in some other advice," said Mr. Dibdin, politely relieving her from the embarrassment of saying so herself. "I was about to propose it myself, madam. It will be more satisfactory to all parties."

A note was accordingly hastily written and de-

spatched to Mr. Plumley, the other medical man at Southwell. Mrs. Aldridge urged John to return as quickly as he could; indeed, she was on thorns till Mr. Dibdin took his leave, to suggest to Mrs. Barnard that no time should be lost in sending for the priest. It was sad, indeed, that it should be necessary to suggest this; but so it was. Mrs. Barnard was all absorbed in her mere natural affection, and the soul of her daughter seemed utterly forgotten. The subject was as unwelcome and painful to her as any mention of preparations for the funeral would have been. However, she could not but instantly agree to Aldridge's proposition.

"Of course," she said, bursting into tears. "Do you give directions, Aldridge; I cannot leave my child;" and she cast her face down upon the bed

and wept uncontrollably.

By and by John returned from his very needless embassy to Mr. Plumley. He was quickly followed by the medical gentleman himself. His opinion, of course, coincided with that of Mr. Dibdin. There was no room, indeed, for difference on the subject. Then with respect to the propriety of the measures that had been adopted by the latter, Mr. Plumley also coincided. Doctors commonly do on such occasions. Meanwhile John is getting ready the little carriage, and harnessing the horse; and poor Mrs. Aldridge is miserable till she hears the wheels rolling out of the yard. She calculates that in about an hour and a half, at the furthest, Father Musgrave will be with them, and if then only God, in His mercy, should grant an interval of returning consciousness! She begs Margaret,

who has just recovered from her hysterical seizure sufficiently to get up, to join her in *Hail Marys* to obtain this blessing; and she proceeds herself to say them with much fervour, and her companion, I am afraid, with as much distraction. How could she pray with fervour who was suffering a double accusation to rest upon the head of another, while she herself was the guilty one?





CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONCLUSION.



rs. Leslie was only half conscious during the doctors' presence, but after their departure she slept. The one thought, however, pursued her in her broken slumbers, and every itself accordingly. The last object

thing shaped itself accordingly. The last object of which she had been cognisant before she fell asleep was the white surface of the counterpane of her bed, which was on a level with her eye, and the half prostrate form of her mother bent down upon it. She had not realised, however, who it was; and by one of those strange inversions of mind which take place in a half-waking state, she began to imagine it was herself, and the white counterpane was transformed into a wide expanse of ocean. She thought she was listening to its dull roar as she lay helpless upon its margin; and the wind and rain against the window of her bed-room seemed to her the breaking of its ceaseless waves and the spray rattling upon the beach. Yes, she was dying upon this deserted shore, and the ocean of eternity was spread out before her. The tide was coming in, that was to bear her away. Oh, for the cleansing bath of penance before entering into its stainless waves! Oh, for that invigorating and healing oil which shall fit her to meet the last struggle! and, oh, for that bread, the "refreshment of holy souls, the viaticum of such as die in the Lord," in the strength of which she may joyfully make that last and awful journey! She lifts up her eyes, and sees the figure of a woman coming over the waves towards her. Her feet skim over them lightly; and as she draws nearer, she sees that she is exceedingly fair and pale, but that she has the features of Winifride. She is bearing in her hands a remonstrance, as the blessed St. Clare is represented, from which rays of dazzling brilliancy proceed. Gradually, however, the figure of Winifride sinks into the deep ocean, till she is swallowed up in it; but the remonstrance remains in the air, shining over the waves, and it seems to approach her as if carried by some invisible hand. Oh, joy! but, oh, disappointment also! She awakes, and it is but a dream; and as she awakes, she hears the church-clock strike six. "Six o'clock!" she rpeeated mechanically, after it had ceased; and her voice, for the first time during the day, was clear and distinct. Mrs. Aldridge, who was in the room, was by her side in a moment. "Oh, Aldridge! a priest!-it is a priest I wish to see! Lose no time; I can speak now."

"He is here!" exclaimed Aldridge, fervently clasping her hands; "he is here! He came but this very moment; some good angel has sent him!"

"Thanks to God and our blessed Lady," said dying woman, "and to the good angel who

has asked and obtained this blessing for me; for I have not deserved it myself!"

Mrs. Leslie has received the last sacraments of holy Church with deep fervour and devotion, and she has learnt from the priest to whose charity, by God's mercy, she owed the blessed opportunity of so doing. She longs to see her benefactress and thank her before she dies; and this must be very soon, for she desires to take leave of every one without delay, that she may give the very short time that remains entirely to communing with her God.

John had not been absent above a quarter of an hour when Father Musgrave arrived. John drove fast, and had soon reached the neighbourhood of Ennesley. He had already anticipated some delay from the waters, as they were usually out after such heavy rain; but he little expected what an obstacle to his progress he had to encounter. In fact, something unusual had occurred. The cause of the occasional overflow was an embankment in a neighbouring river, which was insufficient for its purpose when the waters were much swollen. They then poured over the bank and discharged themselves, as their nearest outlet, into the stream which, as has been seen, unfortunately crossed the road to Grassover; but the sudden rise of the river during the afternoon had caused the embankment to give way, and a tremendous volume of water was in consequence seeking an exit through a very narrow channel.

When John reached the scene of devastation, it was too dark for him to see clearly the state of

things; but the noise of the waters and their depth at some distance from what he knew must be the worst part, were quite sufficient intimation that it were better not to attempt the ford. But the good man felt that this was no ordinary occasion, and, possible or impossible, the thing was to be attempted. The horse, however, was not of the same opinion; and though usually a docile animal, when he had advanced to a certain depth, and a few more steps must have placed him in the current of the stream, with that instinctive sagacious-ness which animals display on such occasions, he stood stock-still, and nothing would induce him to do more than snort and lift one or other of his fore-feet in the water. And well it was for man as well as horse that he displayed such obstinacy, as the force of the stream would certainly have soon upset the vehicle. John was at his wits' end what to do; he seemed to be losing time to no purpose, and yet he was determined not to give the matter up: dangerous as the experiment might be, he believed that if the attempt were not utterly hopeless, any risk ought to be dared in such a cause. The rain had abated during the last quarter of an hour, and the thick clouds had begun to break; just at this moment they rolled away from before the face of the moon, and she looked forth as out of a dark cleft in the heavens. The light poured upon the scene before him, and the man looked with dismay at what it revealed to him: the bridge broken down, and the stream making wild work with its fragments as it rushed over or around them. On the other side, where water usually made its passage, after crossing the road, between two banks, each crowned with a hedge, the nearest of the two had sunk and crumbled down into the stream, thus serving further to obstruct its channel and increase its fury; while the depth was at once apparent by the height to which it rose, even where the bank on the road-side remained uninjured. John saw all this at a glance, and judged at the same time that it would be folly to persevere in his design. That transient moonbeam seemed to have been granted to him for this purpose; for the clouds have again closed in, and all looks, from the contrast, darker than before. All that remains for him to do, is to return as fast as he can, put up the carriage, and go on foot over the fields to Grassover.

What a loss of time! But what else can be done? He is about to turn his horse's head, when his lingering reluctance to give up his purpose and retrace his steps, made him give another scrutinising look at the ford, as the moon for a moment peered forth again. His eyes rested on the part of the bank which had given way: what was that bright white light which reflected the moonbeam? It was not the water; no, it was something on the bank beyond the water's edge. He gazed more intently, for the moon still remained unveiled, and as he gazed he thought he perceived something lying upon the bank;—it might be a human creature; but what was the ray of white light which seemed to rest upon it, or rather to proceed from it? John was determined to ascertain the truth of the matter; he therefore backed his horse, for the animal very prudently declined advancing a foot, and then

made him draw up nearer the bank. Here, hoping most sincerely that the perverse beast would not turn and trot home, he got out of the carriage, addressing many soothing epithets to the animal, to induce him to remain quiet. Clambering along the bank, he held on by the branches of the hedge which grew upon its summit, to keep himself from falling into the water, till he reached the part that was broken down and partially surrounded by the water. The moon, which had once or twice left him scrambling on in darkness, now burst forth in all her brilliancy; it shone upon the lifeless figure of a woman. The stream reached above her knees, but her head and her arms were out of the water. Her face was thrown back, and turned up towards the moon's full light, and her arms were crossed upon her bosom; and what was it which they pressed so closely to it? It was a snow-white image of immaculate Mary.

"O Winifride, Winifride!" exclaimed John.

"O Winifride, Winifride!" exclaimed John. It was indeed Winifride. The stream had borne her along, and exhausted with previous fatigue and cold, she had instantly lost all consciousness. Struggle, therefore, she had made none; but she instinctively clasped her image to her bosom, as she sank in the water. If the bed of the stream had been unobstructed, she would have been carried away by the current; but the sunken bank, with its tangled hedge, presented an obstacle, and the force of the water bore her up upon it, leaving her in the position in which John found her. He raised her in his arms; but he had now a difficult and dangerous undertaking before him, to return along the bank with this burden, while

his hands were no longer as free to steady himself by laying hold of the branches. How he accom-plished it in safety, he could scarcely have de-scribed afterwards; he seemed to make one of those superhuman exertions, of which we are capable only when life is at stake, and which we wonder at when past. A life dearer now to him, as he feels, than his own is to be saved; and what would he not, what could he not do to preserve it? Ah! but is it so indeed? Is there yet life to preserve? He did not feel the full force of this question till he had safely deposited his treasure in the carriage. Little did poor John think of all the mud and wet which he was at the same time conveying in such profusion into Mr. Barnard's equipage. It was, of course, an inevitable mischief under such circumstances; but John did not even recollect it. Winifride seemed the only not even recollect it. Winitride seemed the only person in the world to be thought of or cared for. Oh, how fervently did he pray, as he had not for months prayed, that her life might yet be spared to him! How truly did he feel what her value was, when perhaps he had lost her for ever; and his sins, he confessed, had deserved this punishment! Wringing the wet out of her clothes as well as he could, and wrapping her round in his own thick coat, which he had taken off when he left the carriage, he drove rapidly home. "Yes," he said to himself, and he gathered hope from the thought, "our dear Lady will save Winifride; was it not the white beam from her image which discovered her to me? I should never have seen her but for that. Oh, yes, Mary will save her."

"Where is Winifride?" asked Mrs. Leslie, and her eyes wandered round the room. She had taken a calm and affectionate leave, first of her parents, and next of the servants, who were all collected in the room. No distinct reply was made to the question by any present; and a piercing look of sorrow passed over the dying woman's countenance. "Mama," she said, turning to Mrs. Barnard, "dear mother, you have not sent Winifride away?"

Mrs. Barnard answered by a look of mute and tearful despair. Mrs. Aldridge glided up to her, and whispered something; and the poor mother, whose sole desire now was that her daughter's last wishes should be gratified, brightened up at what she said. "Yes, dearest Louisa, Winifride will be

here directly. Aldridge will bring her."

Mr. Barnard raised his face from his hands, in which it had been buried, with a look of inquiring surprise; but his wife laid her hand on his with an imploring look. It was no moment even for Mr. Barnard to find fault, and he was silent.

Aldridge returned very soon, and with her came Winifride, but so pale and wan you would have scarcely known her. She approached the bed, and Mrs. Leslie extended her arms to her, and clasped her in them.

"Winifride, my more than sister, I see you once again! May God reward you for all the good you have done to me!"

There was a murmur of surprise in the room, which not even at that solemn moment could be quite repressed.

Winifride had been taken in again, because she

was dead or dying; and means had been used to restore her, because Christian charity, and even natural compassion, required it; and she had been admitted to take leave of Mrs. Leslie, because a dying person's requests cannot be refused. But still she was Winifride, the artful and disobedient girl, the liar, and the thief. Nothing had cleared or exonerated her from these charges.

Mrs. Leslie heard the half-suppressed murmur, and guessed in part its cause. "It is time," she said, addressing all present, "that I should declare what Winifride really is, and what I owe to her. I lightly esteemed her once, as perhaps many of you do, because she was ignorant; but I found she knew what I knew not; she knew how to serve Jesus out of love, and without thought of herself. My devotion was all selfish, and for the comfort of my own mind; and she taught me to look out of myself, purely and simply to God. I clung to life before, and could not bring myself to make the sacrifice of my husband and child; but she taught me that to love no sacrifice is hard. Oh, that I had profited better by the lessons she gave me!".....

"I give you lessons!" at last exclaimed Wini-

fride, with unfeigned astonishment.

"Do not interrupt me, Winifride," said Mrs. Leslie; "for I cannot speak for long. I do most deeply now regret I profited so little, and that I had so seldom recourse to the sacraments. I blame no one but myself, my own coldness, and weakness, and hesitation. God has had compassion on me, and not suffered me to die without them; but this also I owe to Winifride. It was she that took

the alarm, and sent Father Musgrave to me, and walked many miles through storm and rain to find him. My dear father and mother," she added, turning to them, "I must tell you, a month ago I wrote a letter to be given to my dear husband, in case of my death (little then thinking, however, it was so near), in which I have commended Winifride to his kindness and care; and I now make it my request, that, with his consent, she may have the care of my child till he can speak; that he may first learn from her lips the sacred names of Jesus and Mary."

Up to this moment all had listened in silence, though Mrs. Barnard looked bewildered, and Mr. Barnard had evidently to exert much self-control to hold his peace; but this was too much for him.

"Dear Louisa," he said, "I have said nothing hitherto, for we wish every thing to be done that can be a comfort to you at such a time; but we cannot allow you in ignorance to make such a bequest. We all know, and Winifride herself must know, that she is not only unfit but unworthy to hold any situation of trust; she has been guilty of an act of dishonesty in this house, and how could your mother and I conscientiously give the charge of our grandson to one who is unfit to be trusted even with our property?"

"Winifride a thief! oh! no," replied Mrs.

Leslie; "it cannot be; it is not true."

"True! no, indeed. It is a wicked lie: Wini-

fride is an angel."

These words came from a remote corner of the room, and were uttered by John, partly for his own satisfaction, and partly for the benefit of any one who would listen to him, which nobody did; and, indeed, all attention was immediately engrossed by the deep and passionate sobs of Margaret. She threw herself on her knees, and confessed herself to be the criminal, with many tears. "It was I," she said, "who went out to the fair at night; and it was I who took the sugar,—only it was not to steal it, but because I had broken the sugar-basin, and took it to mend. Winifride knew nothing of it; she is innocent of it all."

"I knew it, I knew it!" exclaimed John.

"And never justified herself!" exclaimed the astonished Mr. Barnard.

" It is like her," said Mrs. Leslie.

Winifride bent down towards Mrs. Leslie, partly to hide her shame, greater at her vindication and praise than it had been in her disgrace, and partly to whisper something to her:—it was to beg her to ask for Margaret's forgiveness.

"Dear father and mother," said the dying woman, "you must forgive poor Margaret; Winifride has asked it, and you owe it to her not to reject her only request after all she has suffered;

and me I know you will not refuse."

Mr. Barnard, softened beyond his wont, rose, took his daughter's hand, kissed her pale forehead, promised that her requests should all be attended to, and left the room.

"Draw that curtain for me," said Mrs. Leslie, "for the light hurts my eyes, and pray for me, my dear friends, all of you, for my strength is failing. Dear mother, do not grieve for me, for I am happy, and willing to die now. Aldridge, you

will take care of her. Winifride, don't leave me; there, put your arm under my head again, and support it; and when I can no longer speak, whisper in my ear the sweet names of Jesus and Mary."

Half an hour later, the priest's voice was heard beginning the commendation of the departing soul.

Five years have clapsed, and many changes have taken place in Southwell. Mr. Barnard is dead: he was seized with a fit of apoplexy not long after the loss of his daughter. The Laycocks have left Southwell to live in London; and Colonel Leslie, who returned from India soon after his wife's death, and who about the same time inherited a large sum of money from an uncle, has bought their former house. He is a good Catholic, and spends his money well. Thanks to him, there is a regular mission now in Southwell, and two priests. Mrs. Barnard is a changed woman. She has left her old house since her husband's death, and has a smaller one near the chapel, at which there are no more constant attendants than herself and Mrs. Aldridge. The latter has profited by the lessons the ignorant Winifride gave. She has learnt no longer to judge harshly, or reprove unlovingly; and Margaret, who still lives with Mrs. Barnard, has improved in proportion. Mrs. Aldridge has won her confidence. Margaret knows she is her friend; and advice now comes with quite a different effect from her. It is rumoured among Margaret's gossiping friends that she is engaged to that little quiet-looking man who keeps the coal and potato shop at the corner of the street. I will not vouch for the truth of it; but I can tell you he is a devout Catholic, and very unlike Mr. Karl Stettin.

Mrs. Munt, we fear, is much what she was, only she looks somewhat older. She lives with a family abroad, and has added a little bad French, and a few more airs and graces, to her stock of accomplishments.

John Ranger is coachman to Colonel Leslie; and he and Winifride—for they have been married these two years—live at the pretty lodge the Colonel has built at the gate, and Winifride does the washing for the family. She first acquitted herself faithfully of the charge Mrs. Leslie left her; and for three years was nurse to little Arthur, and taught him his first prayers; nor would she marry till this duty had been performed.

John thinks he has found a treasure in Winifride, and he is not mistaken in so thinking; for "she will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life." All who know her love and esteem her, more or less, but few fully know her real value; for she is still the same bashful and retiring Winifride as ever. Little Arthur, her former nursling, loves Winny dearly, and spends many an hour in her little garden and sunny room. He brings his holy picture-books for her to talk to him about the saints and martyrs, and Mary his Mother—for he has none but her—and he tries hard to teach his former nurse to read. I doubt, however, if she

will ever do much credit to her instructor, and if she will not continue the same ignorant Winifride all her life long; ignorant of every science save one—the science of the saints, the love of God.

THE END.

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CHAPTER I.

LIFE BEGUN.

T was a summer day, and the sun lighted up the face of a fine old house, and the foliage of many ancient oaks which stood near and around it. At the back of "the great house," as the villagers

called it, stood a small church. Scraps of painted glass, preserved in broken bits among the modern white which filled the windows, told this church's history. The figures, so well known to Catholics, of the Sacred Wounds, told of Him who had once dwelt upon the altar there, and the sword-pierced heart of her whom it has been the glory of all generations of the Church to call "blessed."

But this church, like all the other old churches of this country, had been taken from its former owners and turned from its former use. On the day of which we speak it was open for a christening. It is the doctrine of the Catholic Church that the Sacrament of Baptism, to be valid, need not be administered by a Catholic. If the right words and the right water are used, and the water is poured and the words are said at the same time, and with the intention of doing what the Church does, then the child is properly baptised; in plain words, the child is a Catholic; and if it dies, it is

instantly a glorious saint in heaven.

But whether the child this day baptised at Woodcote Church was truly baptised or not, I cannot say, for I was not there to see; and I am confident that of those who were there, not one could tell you any better than myself. But I must inform you that the child was the son of Mr. Woodcote's head-groom; that his mother had been Mrs. Woodcote's maid; that the satin mantle had been embroidered by Miss Woodcote, Miss Emma, and the governess; and that a christening dinner was preparing to be sent from Woodcote House to Myrtle Cottage, where, close to the garden wall, and in one of the prettiest scenes that you can imagine, lived Richard May and his wife Hannah, and their newly-christened baby Robert Charles. The child was called after his two grandfathers; and I don't think that any child ever came among fonder hearts, or hearts more confident of happiness and success.

Time passed on, and the child grew. Never was child more healthy and good-tempered. He had no brothers or sisters. His parents doted on him of course, and yet he was not badly spoilt. The Great House kept things and people in order; and even when Baby had grown into Bobby, and

could trundle a hoop, and stand on a bucket turned bottom upwards to groom a quiet pony's mane, he yet, with all his play and boldness and spirit, held the place where he was born in reverence, and stood with his hat off for Mr. Woodcote or the ladies to notice him, and ceased his song, and hushed his whistle, and lowered his loud young voice, when he was any where near the house.

And all this was very good; for reverence is a beautiful thing; - reverence is a high and holy thing; it raises the mind, and fills the heart with something grand and solemn, and makes a boy something better than he would be without it; it makes him a being of thought and feeling and recollection, and also of freedom. I know that there are parents in this country who say of their boys that they are free-spirited, saucy young fellows, and are contented that it should be so, even like that it should be so. They forget that they are praising their children for tempers which scarcely raise them above the brutes; and that they are contented that they should never know one of the best qualities of our human nature. And I say this very strongly, because the habits of reverence in which Robert May was brought up did him great service. The very recollection of those times in his days of trial, raised him above the brutes who lived around him, and kept his mind open for better things.

And so Robert grew, and seemed to be the only thing that changed upon that ancient place. Certainly the young ladies changed a little, and the eldest married, and the governess went away; but with these exceptions, Robert seemed to be the only changing thing at Woodcote. The change from the baby in his mother's arms to a boy of ten years old, and very tall and stout for his age, was considerable; and he was so quick at every work at which he was allowed to try his powers, and so clever at his book, that his father used to say the boy made him feel quite foolish.

Robert was truly a very fine boy,—a boy of good disposition, high and daring spirit, and great quickness of mind. Already there seemed to be something superior about him; he had such a quiet steady way with him, notwithstanding his being so spirited. Mr. Woodcote used to say he was the best one to carry a message on the whole estate; he listened so steadily, understood so well, and delivered it so exactly-and this at nine years old. He rode a quiet pony, with a letter-bag across his shoulder, two miles every day to the post-town, and seldom forgot one of the many messages with which the servants trusted him. He never went to school, but his mother had taught him to read and write; and already it was said that he could read like the parish-clerk. The steward used to notice him: he had promised to teach him figures; and the way in which Bob bought goods, and brought home change, seemed to promise that he would get on well in that as in so many other things.

Before leaving this time of our young hero's life, I must mention a visit which was paid by a grave, pleasant-looking woman, in widow's weeds, to Richard and Hannah May. This widow was Hannah's sister; she was called Mary Ashton;

and she was accompanied by a little girl called by the same name.

People said that Mrs. Ashton was very like Mrs. May, and yet, and at the same time, very unlike her too. It was not only that Hannah was rather grand in her lavender drawn silk bonnet, her purple-and-red-shot gown, and her white shawl with its deep-coloured border, which contrasted strongly with the black merino and crape bonnet of her sister; it was not only that Hannah looked blooming and happy, and smiled gladly on her promising boy, as she stood with her arm within that of her tall, stout, healthy husband, looking so well in Mr. Woodcote's gold-laced livery, and that all this contrasted strongly with Mary's calm face and glance of sadness towards her orphan child: the difference between the sisters did not lie so much in these things as in a something very difficult to put into words for you to read, and yet very visible to all persons who could be said to think. In figure, features, complexion, and hair, the sisters were remarkably alike, and yet this something differenced them. Every body liked Hannah—she was a good, pleasant creature; but when people looked at Mary, they felt that there was a good deal to know in that woman, and that there was something very much out of the common about her; and in the minds of the better sort of people there would rise up a desire to know more about her. It was the first visit that Mary Ashton had ever paid to Woodcote.

She only stayed a week. She then went to see a friend in the next county; but her sister allowed

her to leave her little girl behind her until this other visit was finished. She had explained to Hannah that a child might not be welcome where she was going; so little Mary and Robert were left together. The children had quickly grown fond of each other. Mary had lived her little life in a large town, and she was delighted with the gardens and park, and woods and farms of Woodcote; and Robert was beyond measure pleased to show her all she loved to see. Every moment he could spare he devoted to his cousin.

It was a Saturday afternoon; the children were returning from a long ramble; Mary was tired, and as she passed the church-gate said, "Oh, I

may sit down and rest here, mayn't I?"

"Of course you may," said Robert, with a little air of manly dignity; "but why did you not ask Aunt Ashton to bring you here to church last Sunday? People said to me, 'Where's Mrs. Ashton?"—I was quite ashamed. Mr. Woodcote expects every body to go to church. I'm afraid he'll ask for you to-morrow, if you don't come with mother and me."

"I mustn't go," said Mary. Robert had not time to express the boyish displeasure at his heart, for Mary went on—"But I should like to see the inside. The door is open—some one is cleaning it; may I go in with you?"

"Of course you may," said Robert again; and hand in hand they walked up the "middle aisle," where old Mrs. Esher was taking up the matting, and making preparations for a careful sweeping.

"Do you never go to church at home?" asked

Robert.

"Always," answered Mary, steadily gazing at the east window, where the remnants of old glass remained. She was still holding Robert's hand. "And there is the heart of our Blessed Lady—just like one mother showed me in our chapel at home." And her childish voice went on—"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

"Oh, Mary! what are you saying?" The boy jumped back from her with a sudden horror: it was indeed a horror; he recollected it full fifty years afterwards; and he had not forgotten it on his dving bed.

"Let us go out," said Mary suddenly; "I hate this place; and what have you got to do with that? It isn't yours!" She pushed past him, and went

out by herself.

Robert followed her. He was so fond of her in his boyish way, she was so sweet and engaging a child, he could not bear to see her so determined, or to hear her speak so firmly; the tears rushed into his eyes. He took her hand, turned her averted face round with his other hand, till she looked at him, saw tears in her eyes too, and kissed her cheek. "Please, Mary, don't speak like that; I don't understand you."

"Never mind, cousin Robert; we are friends again now—it was all my fault—let us go home."

And home they went, those two young children, one all cleverness for this world, the other all wisdom for the next; one surrounded by friends, the other an orphan, but the child of Mother Church.

Sunday came; Hannah stayed at home, and little Mary with her. The parents thought that

their son was ignorant of there being any differ-ence between the faith of the Ashtons and their own; but Bob had found it out, and with his peculiar sagacity he kept it to himself. He went to church with his father. In the evening he and Mary played, and walked, and talked in the garden together. Mary sat by his side in an arbour, and showed him how she thought of the mysteries of the Rosary as she said her beads. Bob heard the story of them with delight, and could nearly tell all about them in an hour himself. But Mary thought him very ignorant, and said he ought to know better than to put the mysteries in their wrong places; and having made him see the correctness of their succession from the Annunciation to the final glory of all the Saints, she gravely walked by his side up and down the gravel-walk, and talked of schools, and priests, and nuns; of holy pictures, and great saints, and of all that her little heart had taken in so freely and so often. It was the pleasantest Sunday Bob had ever had. It was better than running after the rabbits, or seeing the pheasants come out to feed, or throwing bread to the gold and silver fish. It was better than a ride on Jack the pony, or a race with Dash the dog. It was a glimpse into a new world, a better world, a world of souls,—a world glorious, because it prepared for Heaven, the world of the servants of God. And the young warm-hearted boy thought within himself that it would be great and honourable, and satisfying to the heart, to serve *Him*; and he stept with a firm tread, and lifted his sweet face to the skies, and thought how grand a thing it must be to be always taking care of his soul,—how great a thing it must be to be constant in the service of Jesus!

There are still thousands like him—thousands who have thus felt—thousands who would have been easily led to devote themselves to God—thousands, in whose behalf, before the Judge of all, the stones of our desecrated churches continually cry out, "Let those who have destroyed the sheep-folds answer for the wandering of the sheep." If such words were to be uttered at the last great day of judgment, oh, what a sentence it would be!

While holy thoughts were rising in young Robert's heart, as he walked by Mary's side, and she, in her artless way, was telling him of the life she was growing up in, in the Catholic Church, Mr. Woodcote passed the garden-gate, and stopped to

speak.

"How do you do, Bob? I hear that you guided your little cousin over half the estate yesterday. I wonder you have any legs to stand on to-day. You must not kill her in her mother's absence. Do you like the country, little girl? What is your name, my dear?"

"Mary, sir; and I like the country very much."

"Where do you live?"

"In Preston, sir."

"What! Preston in Lancashire?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bless me! Fancy your coming from such a distance; but you speak like a Lancashire girl—how old are you?"

"I shall be ten years old next month, sir."

"Tall, but very thin," said Mr. Woodcote. "Do you work in the factory?"

" Not yet, sir."

"Quite right. Ah! fond of finery: why don't you put your necklace on, little girl?"

Mary coloured; she shut her Rosary up closer

in her hand, and didn't speak.

Bob saw her confusion. "It's not a necklace, sir; it's something holy; it's a Rosary, sir. Show

it to master, Mary."

"A what! A—a—, you young rogue, what do you mean by pretending such innocence? Do you mean to tell me—" and Mr. Woodcote shook his stick at the astonished Bob—" do you mean to say that you don't know that a Rosary is a Popish abomination? that it's wicked—sin—a—a— you naughty boy! What, does your father mean, I should like to know, by harbouring Papists on my property? a Rosary, eh? Give it to me."

Mary stepped back, and held her Rosary with

both hands, and tighter than before.

"Master must see the Rosary, Mary," said Bob, holding out his hand.

But Mary shook her little head, and looked up

pitifully into Bob's beseeching face.

"What! Not give it to me? not give it to me?

Bring it here directly, child."

"Please, sir," said Mary, "I can't. It is a blessed Rosary—it has been blessed by the Pope; and I can't either lend it or give it away."

Mr. Woodcote actually shouted in reply. He was very angry. "Give it to me this moment, I say; I'll show you what is done with Rosaries on my place!"

"But I can't, sir:—please, please," cried the child, the tears streaming down her face, "please,

sir, don't be angry with me. I could not part with it, and you are going to hurt it; oh, I know you are!"

"Take it from her, Bob; take it from her di-

rectly, I tell you; take it out of her hand!"

While Mr. Woodcote was speaking, Bob had begged Mary to let him have the Rosary; but she only squeezed it up in one little hand, and clasped the other over it.

"Take it from her, I say!" roared out Mr.

Woodcote.

"Please, sir," said Bob, "you see how she holds it; and she is a little girl, and I can't fight her, sir."

A smile came across Mr. Woodcote's face. He could not help seeing that the boy was right, and he looked pleased for one moment. Still he was very angry.

"Where is your father?" he asked.

"At the stables, sir," answered Bob.

So Mr. Woodcote said he should speak to Richard May; and he walked off quickly, swinging his stick, and looking as if he was talking to himself, and working himself up into a state of great displeasure. But there was no occasion for any working up, for Mr. Woodcote was seriously angry. He hated Catholics, blindly and ignorantly he hated them, but not the less bitterly for that.

The children watched him out of sight in silence. Then they looked at each other, and both burst out crying. Back they went to the little arbour where they had lately been so happy, and down they sat; and through fright at the past and fright at the future, they felt more miserable than either had ever felt before. They could do nothing

but cry; but still Bob held Mary by the hand, to show that he had not deserted her.

Bob was the first to speak: "O Mary, what shall we do?"

Poor little Mary! she could only answer, "O Bob, what have we done?"

"We have offended Mr. Woodcote."

"But I should have offended God if I had given

up my Rosary."

"Oh, but we have offended Mr. Woodcote!" repeated Bob, bending his body and wringing his hands in an agony of distress.

"But we couldn't help it, because Mr. Wood-

cote is wrong," said Mary.

"Wrong! O Mary, you know nothing about it! Oh, what have we done! Mr. Woodcote wrong!" and Bob wept helplessly; for he felt that Mary's ignorance of Mr. Woodcote made matters a thousand times worse.

Mary saw that she had increased Bob's misery,

so she took her own way to comfort him.

"Perhaps Mr. Woodcote was never taught any thing about the true faith. Mother says, 'Don't judge the ignorant,' so we need not blame him, though he is so wrong."

"How can you say that master's wrong?" cried Bob in an agony of distress. "He is the greatest gentleman in all the country; you are like a mad person to say such a thing! We ought to go and beg his pardon. Oh, Mary, shall we go?"

"No; I can't beg his pardon, because I have been right. He is wrong, because he is a Protestant; and I am right, because I am a Catholic. given up my Rosary to a Protestant; and I won't be a bad Catholic. God would not love me, if I was a bad Catholic. I am very sorry that Mr. Woodcote saw my Rosary. But if he was the greatest gentleman in all the world, he would have no right to my Rosary; and I have no right to offend God for him, no, not if he was the king!"

Bob could not help admiring this. He felt, young as he was, that there was truth and sincerity in all she said, and that her religion was worth having. He liked to see how bold it made her. It suited his ardent spirit and manly mind to see a timid little girl grow fearless, and a weak child strong in the cause of the faith that saved her soul. So he said no more about begging Mr. Woodcote's pardon; he led her back to the house, and there told his mother all that had happened; and once more Mary and Bob sobbed and cried, and shook with fear of what Mr. Woodcote might say or do. Hannah took things more quietly, but still she was a good deal disturbed.

"Mary, my dear child, you shouldn't have

shown your Rosary," she said.

"Oh, mother," replied Bob, "she had been showing it to me, and telling me all about it; and it's a beautiful thing, and I can nearly say it myself now; and then Mr. Woodcote saw a little piece which had slipped out from her hand, and then ——"

"Hush, Bob!" exclaimed Hannah. "Teaching it to you! what have you learnt from Mary? Tell me truly, my son."

"See, mother," and Bob spoke more quietly. "She tells by these beads the whole about our

Lord; more than I ever learnt or heard before. Here begins where the angel Gabriel came to the Blessed Virgin; and it goes on—and Mary tells all about every mystery—it goes on till the end of the world, and the crowning of all the Saints. And this is the crucifix; and Mary kisses it and makes the sign of the Cross, so," and Bob made it, "before she begins; and here is the Our Father, and this is the I believe, and ——"

"Hush, Bob, hush!" said Hannah once more, for Bob was rushing on with the greatest vehemence. Then she took Mary in her arms for a moment, and kissed her. "So you would not give your

Rosary to our master?"

"No, aunt; because he wanted it in a bad way.

He was angry with it."

"And my little Mary loves her Rosary, and learns her religion upon it?"

"Yes, aunt."

"Then keep it, my dear child; and I hope you'll never learn any thing worse than you've taught to Bob as long as you live. And now you children had better go to bed; I shall have father home directly."

And as she spoke, Richard May walked in.





CHAPTER II.

who's right?

ICHARD MAY was one of the best-tempered men in the world. He had never known what people call "trouble." A good day's wages for a good day's work he had had ever since he had worked

Excellent health had helped to make him constantly cheerful; and as he had learnt well under good teaching in his youth, he had got the experience and knowledge which make a valuable servant. Richard May was friends with every body, and every body was friends with him. But as to religion, why, he really could tell but little about that. How should he know? He had gone to church all his life-why? Master expected his servants to sit in the servants' pew. But could he go any deeper than this? Why did master like people to go to the parish church, and dislike people going to any of the many meeting-houses that were sprinkled about the neighbourhood? Richard could have given many reasons for this. The church was old and respectable, and looked grander and more suited to the Great House than any other place. And master was a gentleman, and so was the parson; and gentlemen naturally

went together, and so the old church had a genteel congregation in it. And then the land supported the church. Master owned a great deal of land; and what his land paid to, that he went to,-that was a matter of course. Also, master had the great tithes of the parish. Money which had once been given—Richard didn't know when for the support of the church-Richard did not know by whom-now found its way into master's pocket; but how or why Richard had no notion. Only there was the fact; and he felt that it was an acknowledged thing that the antiquated church, which had, once upon a time, been something different, and belonged to different people, had, in these days, got into the hands of the gentlemen of the country; and some of these gentlemen shared in the property, and had things their own way, and made their servants go to church, and put in their sons for clergymen, and got them named to the Queen for bishops; and very natural and right, thought Richard, and he would not have minded having been born to such good luck himselfwished he had. Now Richard entered his cottage. And now, for the first time, he was to be asked the question, Which is right?

"What's the matter, Hannah? What have the little ones been about? Never saw master so

angry in my life. What's the matter?"

"Why, my dear Richard, it's that little darling Mary. Sister would bring her up so very strict and clever."

"I'm only a Catholic," interrupted Mary.
Richard nodded to her. Hannah went on.

"She says prayers upon a string of beads—

master saw it. Then it came out that she was a Papist. But really it can't be worth while to be

angry with such a child!"

- "He couldn't be worse if 'twas witchcraft," said Richard. "Burning is too good for her, small as she is. She must go to her mother"—then he took Mary in his arms, and went on—" and tell mother that uncle Richard must obey his master; but that he loves her and her little Mary with all his heart."
 - " Must the child go?" said Hannah.

"Yes, my dear; she must go to morrow—before twelve o'clock. That's an order—and

orders must be obeyed, you know."

Hannah felt vexed. "But where is she to go? and how? Dear me, you can't turn out a child, to fly straight home like a carrier-pigeon! She must go to some place, and somebody must take her there."

"My dear," said Richard, in the most good-tempered way, "you say truly. But, master says she never ought to have come. And if he has got that in his head, and 'march' is the order, there's

nothing to do but obey."

"I shall go to my mistress," said Hannah. Richard laughed. "If the sin was any thing but Popery, you might get a hearing. I have said all that man may say to master. If the child had the plague, Mrs. Woodcote would nurse her. If she was a thief, there would be good advice for her. Lying, swearing, and evil-speaking, they might try to cure; but—Popery! Well, my dear wife, I'm no judge; but we must be out of luck to love these Papists. I say, I'm no judge; for I know no

more of these Catholics than I do of the stars. I have learnt more from master this night than I ever knew before. I declare I'm quite curious about them. If Mary Ashton was here, I'd go to school to her to night."

"Nonsense, Richard! Do take things more seriously. What have you learnt from mas-

ter?"

"Why I've told you. You may learn it too. This child's religion is that awful thing that the old church, and the young parson, the squire, the great house, and I don't know how many thousands a-year, are no match for it: they can't stand it; she must go."

Hannah was so vexed she did not know what to do. She was even vexed with Richard. He was not joking; but he took things in such a very good-tempered way, as if nothing could move him to displeasure, although he seemed to see the folly of his master's anger against so young a child.

"A pack of nonsense!" said Hannah, losing her patience.

" Put the children to bed," said Richard.

So Hannah took Bob and Mary away; and soon Mary was safely laid to rest in the little white bed in their spare room, having made her examination of conscience, and said her prayers before the crucifix, and put her Rosary safely under her pillow. Hannah watched the child, without letting her see that she was watched, and had her own thoughts about it. Then she went to her own child in the next room. Bob was very busy at some work with string and bits of wood. His mother asked what he was doing.

"Mother, I've made myself a cross. I'm going to say night-prayers before this."

His mother felt her face grow hot.

"I am not going to serve Mr. Woodcote only; I am going to serve God too. I like hearing about Him. I should like to learn to love Him so that I should never sin, or vex Him all my life."

"What do you know about sin, my child?" said Hannah, trying to keep down her tears; for it touched her mother's heart to hear her boy say what sounded so good and grand. "What do you know about sin?"

"What Mary told me while you and father

were talking in the kitchen."

"Did you hear what father said?"

" No; I was talking to Mary."
" And what did Mary say?"

"That great sins are called mortal, and they send our souls to hell. And we are to try never to do mortal sins—never," said Bob, with all possible earnestness—"never, mother. It is cruel to our Lord to do those great bad sins. And He was crucified to save us from sin and hell; and I couldn't be cruel to Him after that." And the child caught hold of his mother's hand and kissed it, and hid his face in it, and burst into tears, so much was he overpowered by that holy thought.

"My dear, we all sin," said Hannah, very softly

and tenderly.

"Not great bad sins," said Bob, kissing the hand he held so tight, and pressing it with all his little might, so much was he in earnest—"not great bad sins, mother. Mary says I need not, and I won't."

Hannah's heart shook within her. "Say your prayers," were the only words she had strength to say. And as the child was kneeling before the cross he had just made, she thought within herself, "And this is the religion which is so bad, that one small child must be chased out of the parish for holding it! She has taught this boy more good than I could have taught him." And so, stifling her agitation, and hiding her tears, she put Bob to bed.

When she returned to her husband, she told him every word that had passed. Hannah had often complained, in a loving way, of the easy manner in which her husband took every thing. But Richard gave her no cause for complaining now. She told him all that Bob had said. "And the child looked so earnest," she said; "he looked so loving; there was something so willing, and free, and noble, in his way of saying those solemn things, that I could not help wishing that the world would let the boy keep his word."

The tears ran down Hannah's cheeks as she

The tears ran down Hannah's cheeks as she looked up at her husband. He had risen from his chair, and was looking steadily at her. "And did the boy say that?" he said, "that he would not serve Mr. Woodcote only, but would serve God too? And did he say it was cruelty towards God to commit sins? Well, then, I think it's the grandest thing I ever heard in my life. That's generous—that's noble—that's religion, I'm sure—that's truth, whoever taught it to him."

Richard took a turn or two up and down the room. Then he stopped before his wife. "When death, Hannah, lays the rich and the poor, the

master and the servant, in an equal grave, those will be best off who will be able to say that they made Bob's resolution as a child, and kept it unbroken through their lives. I'd be content to die to-morrow, if I could be as that boy to-night."

"So would I," said Hannah, sighing. "But

we can't help sinning."

"Sinning badly—mortally, as Mary would say?"

"Yes," sighed Hannah.

"Well, Mary says ' No.'"

"Ah, that's as she has been taught!"

"Then there are two sides to the story," said Richard.

- "There is her side, and our side, certainly," said Hannah, sadly, getting up slowly from her chair and wiping her eyes. "But that's nothing new."
- "No," said Richard, "nothing new. The question is, who's right? Now, I say again, I'd be content to die to-morrow, if I could be as that boy to-night. And more, I thank God for that little Mary's teaching. And I've come to a fixed resolution about her. No dishonour shall be put upon that child. I shall tell master to-morrow that I must return her into her mother's own hands, and that I must take her myself. I can't start with her to-morrow, for I've got to bring home a new horse for the carriage; but I shall ask for a holiday on Tuesday; and Mary Ashton shall receive her child safe, and my thanks with her, though she is never to come here any more."

Then Richard May, taking a lighted candle, went into the room where little Mary lay. His

wife went with him. The child slept soundly. Richard looked at her with a grave thoughtful face. He saw a few beads of the Rosary peeping out from the pillow. Gently he drew it forth. He looked at the little crucifix.

"Hannah," he said, "I can understand the boy's feelings; can't you? I am sorry from the bottom of my heart that I can't be like him. Talk of greatness! That generous thought, that it's cruel to sin against Him,"—he pressed the crucifix to his lips, -" is the greatest, noblest thing I ever heard. Sin against one who suffered for us—and He God! wish with all my soul that I never had."

They went from Mary's bed to Bob's; Richard kissed his son. It was the last kiss he ever gave him. He went the next morning for the new horse. He brought him to Woodcote, and led him up and down before the house. Mr. Woodcote did not like the horse—thought that he looked bad-tempered. He bade Richard take him to the stable. While the horse was being groomed, he was restive and tiresome. Richard was passing behind him, and spoke sharply to him, at the same moment touching a whip which lay in the stable window. The horse kicked viciously. Richard fell. He was not dead, but mortally injured. He was carried home. The doctor said he would live an hour or two. He did not live as long. Richard was dead; and his last look had been at little Mary's crucifix.

There he lay-who had scarcely ever thought of -death, never very seriously till, on the night before, his boy's words had been repeated to him—there he lay; and Hannah stood, calm and silent, though

in bitter grief, looking at him; and the thought in her heart, on which her soul stayed itself for comfort, was of how he had kissed the crucifix, and said that he could understand his child's feelings, and that with all his soul he wished that he had never offended God.

Gone;—gone to God and judgment! His time of trial finished. No more thinking—wishing—intending. All is finished; and he is judged already. There he lay dead; but his spirit lived elsewhere; it had seen Jesus, its Judge; it had received His sentence. What was that sentence? Whatever it was, it could never be altered. He was now-now as she looked upon the still face that would never move again on earth—he was now either lost or saved. The love that must always hope grew strong, grew confident, under the remembrance of his earnest praise of Robert's words,-" That's generous, that's noble, that's religion, I'm sure; that's truth, whoever taught it to him." That had been his heart's answer to the question, "Who's right?" It rose up in the widow's mind, and was her comfort. Other thoughts came in this manner: We owe it all to little Mary. We owe it all to her mother's teaching of her. We owe it all to the Catholic faith. And those thoughts were true.

Hannah was not destitute of other consolations. Friends and neighbours did all that is usual on such occasions. Richard May was buried in the churchyard of the old church. Mr. Woodcote went to the funeral. Bob and Mary were both there. The uncle's death had drawn attention from the child, and Mary still stayed with Hannah; and Hannah

felt that she would never willingly part with the child, and should never be happy unless she saw her and Mary Ashton more frequently than she had done before; and she determined secretly that Bob should learn their religion, and follow it if he liked; and she even hoped that he would.

Did he? Surely, if he did not, it could not be through his mother's fault. Yes, it was. It was his mother's doing that Bob was not brought up in the true faith. And yet his mother never forgot her husband's death, or what had been her soul's consolation in it. But the power of this world was too strong for her.





CHAPTER III.

TEMPTATION.

HIS was Hannah's temptation.

Mr. and Mrs. Woodcote sent for Hannah. They spoke very kindly to her, and kept her sitting with them almost an hour in their morning-room. During this time the following conversation

room. During this time the following conversation occurred.

"Your husband's family have long been servants on this estate, Hannah. Richard has been headgroom more than ten years. He has long, therefore, had high wages. May I ask if he has saved any thing?"

"We have saved forty pounds, sir."

"Very creditable," said Mr. Woodcote. "Of course, Hannah, you must leave the cottage. My new servant is married, and will live there."

"Yes, sir."

"You can have three tidy rooms at the mill, and I shall pay the rent. It is not far off. I shall employ Bob just as I have ever done; and I shall give you a pension, as your poor husband met his death in my stable, of half his wages, weekly; it will be ten shillings a week."

"May the Lord reward you! It is very hand-

some and good of you, sir."

Hannah burst into tears. They were thankful tears; for her future lot had already sadly occu-

pied her thoughts.

You must recollect, my readers, that Hannah had been lady's-maid at Woodcote. She had not been brought up to hard work. Her husband was gone, and her son was not old enough to help her. To be cast upon the world to support him and herself, was a very terrible prospect to her; so it would be difficult to say how glad Mr. Woodcote's words made her. If she had gone into any trade or business, one single illness or accident might have ruined her. She had begun to be afraid of the future.

Hannah stopped her tears as soon as she could, and once more thanked Mr. Woodcote with all her

heart.

"There is," said her master, "but one condition that I shall make. I make it very freely, and, of course, very positively. Your own judgment will approve of mine. My condition is this. You are never to see your Roman Catholic sister or her little girl any more on this estate. I should advise you to see as little as possible of them any where."

Hannah looked ready to die. Mr. Woodcote ob-

served the misery in her face. He went on.

"I have no doubt that Mrs. Ashton is a very affectionate sister to you, and her daughter is a very taking child; and those are very good reasons why you should never see them. They are all the more likely to seduce you from your Protestant principles; and you know that Popery is not the Gospel, but a belief hateful to God."

Hannah knew no such thing. Indeed, she knew the exact contrary. She knew—and she felt it that moment at the bottom of her heart—that the Catholic teaching, that man ought to live without mortal sin, and can do so, was what her dear dead husband had called truth—that he had accepted it at once as religion—that he was glad to think that his son had heard it—and that he only word of repentance that had ever been heard from his lips was in consequence of it; and because of that, Hannah believed that her husband was not rejected by God.

What should she do? Her husband had been glad to think that Bob had loved the truth, and he had rejoiced over the boy's good resolutions. That man was now where all truth was known. She felt that if he could speak to her, he would tell her to let Bob go on as he had begun, follow out the path of love to Jesus, and hatred of sin, for it was the way to heaven.

But what could she do? Poverty was a fearful thing. Mr. Woodcote repeated what he had said. Once, for one moment, Hannah thought, "I can go forth with my forty pounds. The world will think me in the bonds of poverty, but I shall be independent. It will be better than to be called independent with ten shillings a week, and to have my heart and soul in chains." But still poverty was a fearful thing. If she should not get on? If she should spend her money for present wants, and find herself penniless? If she should make an enemy of Mr. Woodcote? So Hannah, crying bitterly, took slavery and ten shillings a week, and went to live at the mill, and sent Mary to meet

her mother, with Mr. Woodcote's message that

they were never to be seen there again.

Is poverty such a very fearful thing? Is it really the case, that for fear of poverty people cannot dare to be true? Yes. People in this country often do not dare to bring up their children in the true faith, because they are afraid of the rich—afraid of the trouble that may happen to them in consequence—afraid of the extremities of poverty. But they had better trust God than man; they don't know what may be in the future.

Perhaps somebody's heart fails as this is read; and they think—Ah, the Catholic who writes this story does not know what poverty is.

You shall judge.

Poverty may come in many ways. But not being able to get work, or not being able to do work, brings it into the working man's house;—then, if this want of wages goes on beyond a certain time, that is, beyond the longest allowed trust from the landlord, the miller, and the general shop, there comes great hardship and degradation—the poverty that is a fearful thing.

Those who have lived in houses go into lodgings; those who have lived in lodgings go into single rooms; and those who have always been in the single room take some one more wretched than themselves to live with them. And the broker's shop gets filled with the beds, bedding, furniture, china, framed prints, and books that had been the comforts and luxuries of prosperous times.

A man does not—if he be a good kind of man—give up these things, except for one purpose. He is hungry, and he must buy food. But soon

that is gone; and if, still, there is no work—what then? He must go into "the House." And this is what English people dread; what they will give up their conscience to avoid. It was what Hannah dreaded. If left to provide for herself, she did not know what might befal her. She might get to the poor-house before Bob was old enough to keep himself and help to support her.

But I must remind whoever reads this, that this is a picture of *Protestant poverty*, poverty in England; for the Union is the refuge of Protestantism. It was not always so. When the religion of the

It was not always so. When the religion of the country was changed, the condition of the poor changed with it. Poor-law rules for Catholic love; the stinted allowance from the heavy parish-rate for the open hand of the Church. And see how many people live on the money paid for the poor: people to collect the money, to bestow the money, to guide the house, to work the law. Very different are these from monks and nuns, the almoners of the Church, embracing voluntary poverty for Jesus sake. It was a bad day for the poor when the true religion was robbed, and so nearly killed, in England. Poverty has been a fearful thing ever since.

But there is a worse thing than poverty. Sin, mortal sin, the sin which kills the soul, is worse than the worst of poverty; and only the Catholic faith teaches what little Mary taught to Bob. In the strength of the Sacraments, and following the teaching of the Church, man may, and ought to keep mortal sin away from him; and this Bob knew, and he received it heartily, with the fresh and strong affection of a young and sincere heart.

The Catechism asks, "Of which must a man take most care, his body or his soul?" And it answers, "Of his soul." "Why?"—"Because Christ hath said, 'What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" But Hannah took most care of the body; for she dreaded poverty, and feared lest she should make an enemy of Mr. Woodcote. Yet she thought of Bob, and said in her heart, that when he grew up, he should do in religion just as he liked; and that would be to become a Catholic.

She went to the mill. The furniture of the cottage was more than she wanted for her three rooms. She had no place to put it away in; so she had a sale. The new groom bought most of the things; and Hannah bought handsome mourning for herself and the boy, and put by a pound or two besides. The summer passed, and winter came; a hard winter, and yet a beautiful season. went out with Mr. Woodcote when he and his friends went shooting; he led hunters to distant "meets," and brought back the ponies and horses on which the hunters had made the morning ride. The new groom found Bob the cleverest boy on the place, and said he could trust him like a man. His mother was very proud of him. He could work in the garden; and his industry and her own had provided a winter store of flowers -lauristinus, hellebore, and monthly-rose. And when she picked her polyanthuses and lent-lilies, she kissed them before she put them in her chinacup, for she owed them to "that dear boy."

When the spring came, Hannah heard with a beating heart that Bob was to learn to drive.

Never was any thing so beautiful as Miss Emma's new little carriage, with a pair of ponies scarcely bigger than large dogs. Mr. Woodcote had laid his hand on Bob's shoulder and said, "We'll have a driver to match. It will be the prettiest turnout in the world; and this boy is as steady as any grey-haired man upon the place."

When the autumn came, Bob was training horses at a leaping-bar; and when Woodcote was full of guests, and there came an idle morning, ladies and gentlemen would be found on the exercising-ground to see "that wonderful boy" ride a leap, and to praise and admire him with lavish words, and sometimes to reward him with money and

little gifts.

This was a very spoiling life,—that every body knew, and many said it. Hannah thought it also; but she had confidence in Bob. Another year went on in just the same way. Bob was thirteen, and his mother fonder and prouder of him than ever. He would talk to his mother about every thing that happened; he had no secrecy about him. Hannah felt that she knew every thought of his heart. Yet she sometimes wondered that he never talked of the Ashtons. He was now so manly, that if he ever gave her the opportunity, she determined to tell him all that had passed. Not long after she made this resolution, the opportunity came. Bob, sitting by the fire one cold evening in February, said, "Mother, we never talk of father."

"Talking of him wouldn't bring him back, my son."

[&]quot;I don't want him back," said Bob.

Hannah was silent.

"If heaven is better than earth, why should we want him back? You think that he is in heaven, mother?"

"Oh, my dear child," cried Hannah, "God for-

bid that he should be any where else!"

"I wonder whether he is," said Bob, gravely and

thoughtfully.

Hannah felt her blood run cold. Then she felt vexed. "Where else should he be?" she said angrily.

"Whether he's out of Purgatory, I mean," said

Bob.

Poor Hannah! She was leading such a comfortable life; such a profitable life too, with Bob's earnings and favours. That one Catholic word—Purgatory—threw her into a fever.

"Not for all the world do you say that word before any body who would repeat it to Mr. Woodcote," she exclaimed; "I thought you had forgotten

all about that."

"Forgotten father's death, mother; how could

"No, not his death, but Purgatory."

"He went there," said Bob. "Mary Ashton told me so, and I believed her; and I've prayed for him ever since."

"Well, don't think about it. Hold your tongue.

How should Mary Ashton have known?"

"Why, don't you recollect?" said Bob. "You told Mary and me that father, the night before, had repented, and said that he wished with all his soul that he had never offended God; and that he had kissed Mary's crucifix; and had said that he

was sure that what she had taught me was truth. And don't you recollect how he held Mary's crucifix in his hands when he could scarcely speak; and how the tears ran down his face; and how he looked at Mary, as if he loved her and all she had said; and how he held out the crucifix to me, and said, when I put my ear to his mouth to listen, 'Think of that, think of that;' and then again, 'Forgive my sins, forgive my sins!' Mary said he had gone to Purgatory, because he had done all he could do, as a person who had never been taught the truth. And if father had recovered, I think—I am sure," said Bob earnestly—"I am sure he would have been a Catholic."

"What a trial this is! Oh, that ever this night should have come to me—and more than two years passed away! Bob, you'll be the cause of your own ruin; I know you will. And I have given up every thing for you."—Hannah had never given up any thing for him; but so people talk who have entered on a wrong course.—"I have given up sister and all for you; and you"—her tears stopped her.

Bob looked up with the face of a man, thought-

ful, anxious, and surprised.

Mother, why don't we know more about Aunt Ashton? You have some money of mine in a purse—gift-money; when I have enough, I am going to see her and Mary. I am old enough to go by myself, if you can't go with me. I understand enough about travelling now. I shall go to Preston. I shall ask Mr. Woodcote to give me a week to spend there. But why don't they write oftener? When do you write to them?"

"Never," said Hannah bitterly, "or scarcely ever. Now, Bob, you are old enough to understand. Now, listen to me." Then she related to Bob all that had happened. And she told him that when he could support himself, and help her, she would leave Mr. Woodcote for his sake, and that he should become a Catholic if he liked. She painted the terrors of poverty so highly to the boy, that he sat crying at the very thought of it. And she said that he never need believe any thing but what he had heard from Mary; and that he could keep to the resolution which had pleased his father, of never doing mortal sin, without telling any body, if he liked.

"But perhaps I can't keep to it," said Bob, stifling his tears. "Perhaps I want more religion to help me to keep to it. And I have thought of saying this many times. But I knew Mr. Woodcote hated Catholics, and so I knew it was no use to say it there, but I thought that it would be of use to say it to you; and I know that I can't keep out of great sins much longer if I don't learn more about religion. I want to go to a priest to be taught. Mary showed me the place in the Bible where our Lord told the Apostles to teach all nations; and she said that her priests came down straight from the Apostles and had the same powers—"

"The same powers!" exclaimed Hannah. "Well, my son, I know the Catholics think so; perhaps

they are right."

"If the Bible is true, our Lord said He would be with them to the end of the world; so they must be right. I've got that place marked in the Testament, too." "Well, my son, believe what you please. Believe your aunt's religion if you like. And keep

out of sin, certainly; that can't be wrong."

"But listen, mother," said Bob, growing very earnest. "Listen, and mind what I say. Protestants don't believe that any boy can grow up to a man, and live and die, without falling very often into bad sins. And yet, when I think of father's death, and of how good and noble I felt, and he felt. Mary's religion to be; and when I recollect the crucifix, and know that Jesus loved us so that He suffered for our sins; and when I think of dear father going out of the world, crying, and saying to me, 'Think of that, think of that,' then I can't bear the thought of doing great sins. Father wished he hadn't; Jesus asks us not; He seems to say, 'Don't grieve me by sin,' every time I think of Him; and so, why should I? Protestants say it can't be helped,—Catholics say it can; and it ought. I'll be a Catholic. I won't turn against my best friend. I won't forget all God has done for us. Why should I be a shame to Him, when His priests can teach me to honour Him? Mother, let me go where I can finish learning to be a Catholic."

Hannah could not help crying. She shed tears to see her son standing before her more like a man than a boy, and pleading the cause of his soul. She felt within herself, that if Richard could speak from his grave, he would be on the boy's side. But what could she do? She kissed her son, and sent him to bed. And that boy's last thought that night was of holiness; and his first thought on waking was, "Keep me this day without sin."



CHAPTER IV.

TRIUMPHS.

core to guard against his again speaking his mind to her. Employment fell in fast. Bob was very busy for months. Hannah was more than commonly glad;

she thought it a good thing that he should have so little time to think - of his soul. He now earned five shillings a week in wages. During the sporting season, when he was so generally useful, he had more, from the presents that gentlemen bestowed upon him. He had presents of clothes also very often; and many little gifts came from the ladies to Hannah, and the more because she was the mother of "that good, clever boy." These were prosperous times. She could not let Robert be sincere. She was sure that no other kind of belief would ever possess his heart; but yet for him to serve God in the way he wished was, she chose to think, impossible. All this Bob felt. He knew all that was in his mother's heart, though she had never explained herself. Bob put it very short to his own conscience. He knew that it was Mr. Woodcote against God; and Mr. Woodcote

won. But still, in the very centre of his heart, as it were, Robert loved God in the right way. He longed to be free to do as he chose; and he adored God in that way which is free, noble, and generous,—humble and full, beyond all words, of thankfulness and praise.

If Robert knew his mother's heart, she thought she knew his. She was sure of his fidelity, and she even reckoned upon it. She would say, "He is so firm, and steady, and true, it won't do him any harm to hold him back a few years;" and so she went on in the old way. Sometimes Hannah wondered, and thought it strange that, during three passing years, Bob should continue so faithful to his first religious ideas. But there was not really any thing to wonder at. These ideas had come to the boy's heart when it was warm and willing to be holy; and perhaps it is impossible to say how fervent and full of offering are a child's first thoughts of Jesus. And, again, these thoughts had been called on quickly to bear fruits, and had been proved and brought before him practically almost as soon as learnt. He had felt his soul grow strong under the love of God, and he had looked on death for the first time almost in the same hour. Could he ever forget his wonderings after that spirit which had left his father's body without knowledge, or feeling, or thought-which had left it to the grave? Could he ever forget how plainly, and with what certainty, little Mary had spoken of those things which he wanted to know about? Could he ever forget the account she had given of her own father's recent death; of the way in which a Christian may meet God? Such

impressions will stay upon children's minds correctly enough till the world wears them away. And Bob lived a life of promise. One day he promised himself he was to learn all that remained; one day he would serve God openly; and this hope for the future kept the thoughts of the past alive. But promises and puttings-off are not the food for faith to live upon. Love will not thrive out of the Church; and resolutions away from the sacraments are struck down by temptation. There came a night,—will the mother ever forget it?—when Robert stood before Hannah, and laid his hand upon her arm. She was frightened; he looked pale and melancholy.

"My son," she exclaimed in terror, "my dear, my darling boy! what is it? Robert, tell your mother,—tell her the truth,—tell her what makes you look like that. Tell her, for you have had no secrets from her,—have you? Tell her—" and the tears poured down her face as she saw his sad, strange, unmoved expression,—" tell her, if you

would not break her heart."

He uttered these words: "Mother, I have done my first great sin. I know it is a bad sin. I know I have been unfaithful to Jesus. I am ashamed to look at my cross. I would die to get my hour of trial back again, that I might not do it. I am like those who mocked God and insulted our Saviour on the cross. But it is done, and I can't get the time back again, and my heart is bursting at the thoughts of it. And now I am quite frightened. I think that I may go on, and do something else, and something else. I can't depend on myself any more. And yet I would rather die to-night than

live a sinner. Oh! I can't live without loving our Saviour; and yet I have denied Him, and let my heart go away from Him, and done the thing He hates; and I hate myself, and am afraid of myself;" and he flung himself upon his mother's shoulder, and wept like a baby.

Hannah said every thing she could think of to console him. They sat close together before their little fire, on their low chairs, their hands clasped together. "My son," said Hannah, "can you tell me all about it. If you think you can, do so. It

will ease your heart and do you good."

Still holding his mother's hand, Robert told all his story. Perhaps it was mortal sin, perhaps it wasn't. At all events, much as Robert grieved, his mother did not think much of it. And she told him it was just nothing at all. He must wipe his eyes, and be a man. It was very dear and good of him to be sorry; and it made her very thankful to have such a tender-hearted son. Now she would get supper; and Bob must not think of that thing any more. It was no use thinking of it. So Hannah succeeded in making Bob look happier; and she became by degrees more and more cheerful, till Robert could not help being merry, and they had some supper and went to bed.

When Robert was alone in his room, he thought a good deal more than his mother would have liked if she had known it. And in spite of all her little indulgences, he said to himself that he should

never be again what he was before.

It need not be said that a Catholic mother would have sent that boy to the confessional; it need not be said that there the first sin he had suspected of being mortal would have been deprived of its poison—wiped out, forgiven, and that every tear and bursting sigh of sorrow would have become precious offerings in honour of the Sacred Heart. But this is the thing to be remembered,—if that boy had been brought up in the Church, he would never have committed mortal sin at all.

This was the only time, at this period of his life, that Robert talked to his mother about his sins and his soul. From that time, as if by mutual consent, there was silence between them upon that subject.

Months passed, and time left its marks upon Robert,-marks which Hannah did not quite understand, but of which she did not dare to take any notice. He was very manly; even his admirers almost thought that in his manner he was too much so. He was a great favourite at the "house," and still, of course, the pride and darling of his mother. But, somehow, as time passed on, it changed him; and his mother felt it did so, but did not know how. Indeed, she did not wish to know how. He was a fine fellow, and very much liked; surely that was enough. Hannah knew that at all manly sports and games Robert was wonderfully clever,-that he was full of knowledge, and had had no little experience in all that belonged to horses and dogs,—that the unerring eye and hand, quick yet steady, with which he used his gun was considered a wonder,-that fish had no chance when he took the rod, and that he could fling himself into the river and swim like one of themselves: she knew all this; yet to her mother's heart he was not all that he had been when he

talked to her so openly, and spoke sometimes of holy things. As this forced itself upon her, she could not help a groan of regret sometimes. But she always said, "It can't be helped;" and then it ended with another sigh, and a determination "not to mind," and "to pass it off." But the real truth was, that though she made the best of little things, and tried to think no more about them than other people did,—though she knew that Robert was called "fast" and "sporting," and felt that those words might have unhappy meanings when thus given to so young a boy,—though she knew that he pursued pleasure, and followed parties and games with all his heart's liveliest energies, that he lost and won money without thought or care, and that he not only could bet, but sometimes drank and swore,—though she made the best of all this, the real truth was, that the purity of his heart was gone. Then was the triumph of sin.

And now that fearful mother would listen in her own room to try to find out if Robert said his prayers. She would wish for some holy thing to drop from his lips. She would hope to see again that open look of lively love with which he once could gaze upon the cross; but in vain. All that was gone. Sometimes she would think of her sister and Mary. It was more than a year since she had heard from them. She used to feel ashamed to write. But now her thoughts would turn to

them in spite of herself.

And while she was thus thinking, she had a letter from Mary. The letter was written in a plain neat hand, and it was very well expressed. She told her aunt that her mother had been ill for six months, and that now the doctor had said that she could not live long,—only a week or two. And Mary went on to say, that if Hannah would like to see her mother before she died, she ought to come directly.

The desire to see her sister was too strong to be resisted. Hannah went to the great house bravely, told of her sister's illness, and asked to pay her a visit. Mr. Woodcote consented to her going. He said many kind things; and said, moreover, that he hoped her going might make Mrs. Ashton see the error of her ways: and Hannah knew the nonsense of that, though, of course, there was no contradicting it.

In two days Hannah was ready to go. Bob went with her to the coach which took her to the railway. She smiled to see how well he did every thing; and she listened like a child to him as he told her how to take her railway ticket, and to observe proper punctuality and caution, and how to look after her luggage; and he advised her to take a fly to his aunt's house when she got to Preston, as it would be late, and it would be better than wandering about the streets with a porter, when she didn't know the way. "Dear me," said Hannah, "how you talk like a man!"

"One can't be a child all the days of one's life,"

answered Bob, with perfect indifference.

"All your life! Why, bless the boy, he is but fifteen!"

"Good bye, mother. And—well, I may as well say it—why did you not think of taking me with you? I should have liked to have gone beyond every thing."

"I did,—I did think of it, Bob," said his mother hurriedly. "I told Mr. Woodcote that I wished you to go with me; and he said, 'No,—not to a Roman Catholic's house.' I pressed him a little; but, believe me, he had not forgotten your cousin

Mary's rosary."

"No more have I," said Robert, faintly; "I have not forgotten. But I am not the same boy I was then. Tell Aunt Ashton and Mary as little as possible about me. The truth is, that God will never have any honour from me. The love is turned to fear. I have no more pleasure in it; I am sorry, but I can't help it. I think very gravely about it sometimes. And though I am but fifteen, I have lost enough to make me as solemn as fifty. There's the coach-horn. Good bye, mother; write me a letter, and come back soon. I wonder whether Aunt Ashton will die. I fancy it will give pleasure in heaven if she does. How free and happy she must feel! But all that is gone away from me now,—that kind of freedom is not for me. Why, mother, what are those tears for?"

"To hear you talk like an old man, Robert. It's enough to break one's heart to hear a boy so

solemn."

"Never mind,—never mind. Here's the coach. Only sons die as well as fathers sometimes; and when I am in the air over the leaping-bar, or taking black Di her galloping exercise, and think how possibly she might slip up, you know, why, then I wonder where the next moment might see me. Good bye, once more."

Hannah was in the coach, her heart almost



breaking between vexation and sorrow. But there was no help for it now; or so she thought.

She got to her sister's. She was rather surprised, and a little mortified, to find that the lower part of the house had tenants in it, and that Mrs. Ashton and Mary occupied two rooms only up stairs. There was enough accommodation, however, for Mrs. Ashton's bed was in the livingroom; she would never get up any more. Very few letters had passed; but Hannah had not expected to find her sister in bad circumstances. The furniture was poor, and there was very little of it. The bed and bedding looked very mean to Hannah's eyes. How different from the room in which she lived at the mill! And the bed-roomwell, really, she hoped she might be able to sleep in such a bed as Mary's. No feather-bed, no pillows, no white counterpane, no curtains, and no toilette-table, no easy-chair, no chest of drawers; all these luxuries Hannah had left at home, and she was not prepared to find her sister living without them.

She took off her bonnet and shawl, told Mary to put her box down by the window, arranged her cap at a dark looking-glass, which was nailed against the wall, and then turned to examine Mary, who had just again entered the room with a lighted candle.

She looked at Mary with very curious examining eyes. She saw a girl about Bob's age, tall and stout, with good features and a firm countenance. Hannah did not think her at all pretty, — and was not pretty; but there was,—so Hannah

thought,—extraordinary intelligence in her steady brown eyes, and something better than beauty in the smile that rested on her face. Mary was commonly dressed. Hannah saw that, with a feeling of contempt and vexation, in a moment. Strong worsted stockings, wooden shoes, and blue hand-kerchief over her head,—for she had just come into the house when Hannah arrived,—and a linsey-woolsey petticoat.

"Not the least bit genteel," thought Hannah,—
"not the least bit like the engaging child who was
with us at the beautiful cottage five years ago."

But Hannah, though a clever woman, is quite wrong in this judgment of hers. Mary Ashton is a very genteel girl, and her aunt will know it before long. The very next moment told her some-

thing of it.

"Will you wash your hands in hot-water after your journey, aunt?" Hannah looks round. What a sweet-toned voice,—what a tender, thoughtful, womanly manner in those few words! And as Hannah looks this second time, she says within herself, "How beautifully neat,—what lovely hair, how smooth and bright,—what an upright figure,—and certainly I never saw such innocent eyes in my life!" And now Hannah is very nearly right.

She goes with Mary into the other room to her sister. The fire burns so brightly that Mary puts the candle out, and begins to pour out the tea by the light of the fire only. As Hannah stands looking at the blaze, she has her sister's little bed on her right-hand side, and the windows with their closed shutters on her left. Just between her and the fire the tea-table stands, and Mary puts a chair

so that Hannah can sit by Mrs. Ashton's side, and take her tea at the same time. Hannah sits down. Mrs. Ashton's feet are towards the fire, and the flame flickers on her face. She is pale, wan, and very thin. She is propped up in bed with all the pillows they possess. They are covered with snow-white linen. Her own dress is most beautifully neat, and brilliantly clean; Hannah's eyes fixed upon the excellent stitching of the wristbands as she placed a cup in the sick woman's white thin hand, and she said: "Does Mary do your sewing?"

"She does every thing," said Mrs. Ashton, with her bright eyes full of love, and fixed upon her daughter. "She has entirely supported me for two months; and yet she never seems to leave the room. Six months I have been ill; four months of that time I crept about, and managed for myself, and sewed a little, while Mary worked at the factory; but latterly Mary has done all, and been

every thing to her mother."

"Such a young girl to work for her bread! And she must work hard too. What do you do?"

"Oh," said Mary, pleasantly, "I get work at home. Friends are kind. I have never wanted work an hour. The pay mayn't be what some people would call high, but we have enough. Enough's perfection, I say."

"The work must be hard though," said Han-

nah.

"It would be harder if there were none," said Mary, giving her mother some toasted oat-cake. There was bread-and-butter for Hannah; and Mary handed her some, after she had helped her mother. As Hannah took the food, she looked up steadfastly to Mary's face; she caught the girl's eye, and then she said softly.

"Never hard to your heart, Mary? Never hard upon your soul to have every thing depend

upon your labour ?"

The girl's eyes met her aunt's, and she listened

earnestly.

"God forbid!" was the reply. "It is a blessing sent to me by the Giver of all good."

"What are you whispering about?" said Mrs.

Ashton.

Hannah made a sign to Mary not to tell; but Mary smiled, and spoke freely.

"Aunt Hannah thinks us poor, mother."

"Are we?" Mrs. Ashton smiled as she spoke.
"I feel rich, sister; very rich; I have nothing to wish for."

"But if," said Hannah, gravely, "if-"

"There is no if in the case," interrupted Mary.
"I am in health, and in work; and we don't want more than eight shillings a-week, and we have got it."

"Why, it's misery!" exclaimed Hannah. "Sup-

pose the future should not-"

"Suppose nothing," interrupted Mary again.
"What we have, we have. See, we make it enough; it is enough."

"I should be afraid of next week," said her aunt. "But, there! it's fine to have the spirits of

youth."

"It's good to trust in God," said Mary Ashton. The words sunk into Hannah's heart. It was sad to Hannah to see her sister's state; and yet the evening passed pleasantly.

Before going to bed, she could not help saying,

"Well, you seem very happy."

Both mother and daughter answered at the same

moment, "Very, thank God."

Mary brought out her bed from the inner room, and began to lay it out for herself upon the floor. Her aunt helped. It was placed close down by Mrs. Ashton's side.

"Do you sleep sound there, Mary?"

"Oh yes; I am so close, you see, to dear mother, that she could make me hear easily. She has a little bell inside there, by her hand. We have found this answer so well, that I go to sleep fearlessly, and get a good night's rest."

"You don't often disturb Mary, then, dear

sister?"

"No, not often."

"Do you sleep much?"

"Very little; the fever is so high."

"And you can lie awake without disturbing

any one. How lonely!"

"I never feel alone. When I sleep, it is God's blessing; when I lie awake, it is like giving me a little more time to live in His service."

"Why, what can you do, lying there?" said

Hannah.

"I can think, and praise. I can be willing, and let God have His own way with me. It is a way of doing nothing, which is part of the good works of a dying bed," answered Mrs. Ashton, with a smile. "But you must often feel too weak to keep your mind up to such things," said Hannah.

"But I can always love, and that includes every

thing," said her sister.

Hannah was silent. Mary began to arrange her mother's bed. She placed the crucifix within the curtain, and hung two little pictures, one of the Blessed Virgin holding her divine Son, and the other of that same Jesus showing his Sacred Heart of love, at the foot of the bed. She brought forward a small table, on which a few things were placed which her mother might possibly want in the night; and then she knelt down, and having given and taken holy water, began the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary—the same rosary—was it? The mere sight of it made Hannah tremble.

"Oh, Robert! oh, my son!"—these were the thoughts of her heart. "Oh, my brave, beautiful boy! there is another courage in the world—another wisdom—another greatness—another respectability—other joys and other comforts than those for which I led you aside from the way you first loved. Oh, what if these Catholics, and these only, should be right? and what if you have gone

wrong through me?"

While Hannah's sore heart was thus crying out, Mary went on with her mother's night prayers. She said the litany for the sick, and her mother made the responses for herself; then came devout aspirations said by both, and evidently, as Hannah thought, from the depths of their souls.

"I desire to praise Thee, O Lord, without ceasing, in sickness as well as in health; joining my heart with the whole Church in heaven and on

earth, blessing Thee for ever. I offer up all that I suffer, or may hereafter suffer, to be united to the sufferings of my Redeemer, and sanctified by His passion; always, not my will, but Thine be done. I love Thee, my God. Come and take full possession of my soul, and teach me to love Thee for ever. I give Thee thanks for all Thy mercies and blessings; above all, for redemption through my Saviour's Blood, and for the love with which He has loved me from all eternity. O Jesus, the day of my distress must be very near. Receive me into Thy arms; hide me within Thy wounds; bathe my soul in Thy most precious Blood."

Then came a prayer for the faithful departed.

And Mary rose from her knees, and kissed her

mother, and gave her the holy water once more; and turning round, and seeing her aunt in tears,

she kissed her too.

Hannah began to stir about the room. She did not like her sister to see her tears. It was time. too, for her to go to bed; and so Mary proposed to accompany her to her room. When they were in the bed-room, and the door was shut, Hannah said--

"Well, Mary, I must say that you are good creatures; but it is the most puzzling thing to see poor sister"—Hannah wiped her eyes—"to see sister dying like that, and to hear you and her so fervent in those prayers; not like reading in any common way, but like—like—why, like even talking straight out to God Himself. It can't but strike me, Mary. She seems to be going off so steady, so strong within herself, so"—she looked at the girl's face, and stopped, for there was such

a fixed, penetrating look there, and almost a smile.
"So what, aunt?" Mary would like to hear

more of what Hannah felt.

"So-I don't know what"-and Hannah cried

again.

Mary smiled a sweet but solemn smile. "So firm in the faith of the one true Church; so steadily kept by grace; so strong in love to Jesus, that she doesn't fear—that she can't fear; that when she says, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' she really does desire it; and that when she says she is willing to suffer, she means that too—any thing, every thing, in the strength of the love that loves Him who first loved her, and gave Himself for her on the cross. She has long been like that. She has no will but the will of God."

"I wonder you can bear it!" exclaimed Hannah, who could now only speak between bursts of distress. "It's enough to break the spirit of one so young."

"But it doesn't do so," said Mary. "It gives me spirit, and such strength and happiness as no girl can know who does not see what I see, and

live as I live."

"I can't see sickness and want in the light in

which you see it," said Hannah.

"But it isn't want," said Mary. "God's blessing is fresh every day. I have never been without a day's work; and as to sickness, why can you—Protestant as you are—look on mother, and not feel that to have to do with one like her is a pleasure and a blessing?"

"Well, I know what you mean; but it shakes

me from head to foot; and things look so mean." Hannah gave a glance round on the whitewashed walls and bare floors.

"Oh, aunt," cried Mary, "no place is mean that has a dying saint within it. The wood of the manger was not mean after that our Blessed Lord had blessed it by lying there. Gold and jewels are too mean to hold it now, if we had any thing more precious to put it in. And, next to Himself, what is there so sanctifying as a soul redeemed by His Blood, burning with love to Him, to whom He so often gives Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, and who will so soon see His face? Oh, this room has never been mean since mother came to it."

"Let me keep you a minute more," said Hannah. "Mary, you don't seem at all bowed down

with grief. You are sorry for her?"

"I can't say that I am sorry for mother. I am sorry for myself. When I think of how many years may pass before I again see her, I am sorry, very sorry; I cry, and I can't help it; and I need not help," said Mary, wiping her eyes for the first time. "But no one can be sorry over mother. It is an hourly blessing to watch her. God's will is being done in mother. She would lie there a hundred years, or go to-night,—whatever Jesus likes. No pain or trial touches her, except to make her better than she was before it came. She can't be a grief to me. The priest says that such sights are the joy of his life. And it must be so—it is the triumph of grace."



CHAPTER V.

IS IT TOO LATE?

ing soul spoke to her cowardly covetous mind. "Is it too late for me and mine to die the death of the righteous, to provide for our last end being like hers?"

She had never mentioned Bob's name to his aunt and cousin. Mrs. Ashton had asked after him, and she had answered that he was very well, and very prosperous, and much admired; and there the subject had ended. She couldn't talk of him to her sister. She could not say to that Godloving woman that Bob's soul had lost its purity because she would not let him be a Catholic. She could not dare to say to a soul on the brink of eternity, to whom time had become like a dream, and the things of time mere nothings, -she could not dare to tell her that for those nothings, to be enjoyed only in that dream, she had trifled away the immortal soul of a boy who had pleaded, face to face, with her for salvation.

Mrs. Ashton loved God with a real love. Hannah saw it very plainly. Not only did Mrs. Ashton's soul live apart from sin—not only was Satan conquered even here—not only had the grave no victory, and death no sting—but labour was not hard, nor poverty degrading. Poor lodging was not mean, sickness was not sorrowful, and pain did not cast down. "Is it too late to die the death of the righteous—is it too late to have our last end like hers?" To die the death of the righteous, you must live their life. Day by day we go through the morning exercise in the Garden of the Soul, and we tell what that life must be; and it is only in God's own Church that we can get strength to walk in God's own way.

Early in the morning, Mary came to her aunt's bed-side. "Aunt, you may get up, and open the door if you like. Only you must kneel: Father Francis is coming with the Blessed Sacrament to

mother."

Hannah rose quickly; she went into that room that she had so lately spoken of as mean. Mary's bed was set aside. Already the bright fire blazed, and light and warmth glowed through the room. A small altar stood near the bed, covered with a pure white linen cloth. On it was a crucifix, and on each side glasses of fresh-gathered roses and bright geranium-leaves. Wax candles were at each end, and already lighted; for Jesus, the Saviour of the world, who promised to give Himself for the food of the world, and fulfils that promise every day wherever Mass is said or Communion given, is expected every moment.

Mary is dressed in her best. The linsey-woolsey is changed for a blue merino dress. Her hair, arranged if possible with greater than common neatness, is covered with a white muslin veil. She has white stockings and bright black leather shoes.

Hannah sees all, and feels that it all points to something too solemn to talk about. She looks at her sister. Mrs. Ashton, as usual, is sitting up in the bed. A new picture is hung on the curtain at her feet—she, calls them her story-books—her eyes are fixed upon it. It is of Jesus Himself, and He holds the Blessed Sacrament in one hand, and points with the other to the chalice. "This is My Body." Hannah would as soon have thought of speaking to an angel from heaven as of interrupting that woman's thoughts.

Father Francis comes. Hannah retires within the door of her room, and she kneels down as Mary told her to do. She hears and sees all—all that there is for her to hear and see. Her heart smites her, and she weeps and grieves, and says, "I cannot die their death, for their strength comes by the Sacraments, and they are not for me. I am outside the Church, a wandering sheep without a

fold."

In a few hours' time Mary had gone to work. Her aunt being there, she had accepted a job out of the house. She had told Hannah that her mother would not want much care that day; that she need not trouble to please or entertain her. She directs her as to food, and little trifles of comfort; and then the good girl goes, once more in woollen dress and wooden shoes; and she leaves her aunt to meditate.

And Hannah thinks thus: "Jesus is here. That girl, at fifteen, is a strong and perfect Christian and soldier of Jesus Christ; and that woman is almost in heaven."

Mary came home about seven o'clock. Hannah

held her relations in too great respect not to get every thing as comfortable as she could by the time Mary came back. The fresh face and light step of the girl made Mrs. Ashton smile.

"You have not wanted me, have you mother?"

"No, my child, not at all."

Mary took her mother's hand. "You are not so hot, mother?"

"No, Mary, I have not been thirsty all day."

"Now have your tea, then."

Mary put the things as usual. She raised her mother on her arms to place the pillows properly. Mrs. Ashton sighed, and fell back. "Put your arm behind her—lay her back." Mary spoke to Hannah, who did promptly as Mary said. In another moment, Mary had revived her mother with some smelling salts, and poured a little of some reviving mixture into her mouth. Mrs. Ashton looked up. "Call one of the children from below," said Mary to her aunt. Hannah did so quickly. "Mother," said Mary, softly yet earnestly, looking in her face, and still supporting her. The mother gave her child a scarcely perceivable smile. The child from below stairs came in—a little boy of about eight years of age.

"Joseph."

"Yes, Mary."

"You see."

"Yes, Mary."

"Now, be quick and steady. Go to Father Francis and tell him that—" A look told the rest; the child knew that Mrs. Ashton was dying.

"Extreme unction," said Joseph out loud.

Mrs. Ashton heard, and gave a motion of assent; and again there was a slight smile.

"Yes, Joe. Now, quickly."

The boy was gone. Again Mrs. Ashton closed her eyes—life seemed flickering; it was almost gone. Hannah turned aside, wrung her hands, could scarcely refrain from a loud cry of anguish; and wondered with a sort of passionate wonder to see Mary so calm-so business-like, she could have said.

The medicine-glass was again put to Mrs. Ashton's lips. Again she drank, and again it did her good. Mary looked from her towards the table.

"Can I do any thing?" said Hannah.

"Please, then, put the table aside. Bring forward the little altar, that which is covered with green baize at the end of the room. The candlesticks and the cloth are in that drawer."

Hannah is very awkward, and goes about the room as if she was sadly puzzled. She is blind with hot tears, too; and when Mrs. Ashton groans, she sobs loudly, and stands still, and is very miserable.

"She is better," Mary says. "Make haste, please, aunt. I think she is better."

Hannah puts the altar where the table had stood, and makes things ready in a moment. But she stops in her work to listen; for Mary is speaking in her mother's ear. Short holy sentences she says, and at the end of each her mother slightly moves her head, to show that she knows, feels, and consents.

"O my God, I once more renounce and detest all my sins."

And must they all be renounced and detested before we die—before I die? says Hannah's conscience. And what if they are not renounced and detested? asks that conscience again. What if Bob should never again repent, as he repented that night when I told him not to mind? Oh, that heart of hers is nearly bursting now. She hears Mary again.

"I cast myself into the arms of Thy holy love."
Mrs. Ashton's eyes open and close quickly, and
she smiles very visibly. Up to Hannah's memory
sprung Robert's last words, "The love is turned
to fear—I have no pleasure in it now." She drops
into a chair, and covers her face with her hands.
She hears no more.

But now Father Francis is come, and Hannah goes away. But she leaves the door open, and she kneels on the floor; she cannot suffer that solemn moment standing. All she is aware of is, first of all some slight movement, then low sounds, and then silence; she does not know for how long; for she is thinking how Robert will die. But sounds come again; Mary's voice, not now firm and strong, but unequal, and full of emotion. She gets up, she is going to try to help her; she advances towards the bed. Is she living or dead? that woman with that pale, wan, yet smiling face, gazing on the figure of her crucified Lord, which Father Francis holds before her? That face so unmoved, that eye so fixed, and that expression so firm and glad; is she living or dead? She is alive, but she is beyond the reach of all distraction now; she will never see any thing else on earth but Jesus on the Cross. The flesh quivers, and the spirit is fled. It is but a moment, but she has seen Him living now. There is no veil between her and Him any more. She has seen the face of Jesus. Seen Him as He is; a smile has judged her. Perhaps she stays separated from Him for a little time. But she can never sin any more; she can never, in any degree, be unfaithful to Him; and gladly will she stay away from Him that little while; for it is for the honour of the justice of the Beloved of her soul.

Mary prayed, not only on her knees, but all day; and day after day, as she went and came, as she pursued her necessary employments. To all the blessed in heaven she prayed. They were now more than ever her friends. She prayed to them, for they waited for her mother to come among them; and their wishes for her speedy perfection were even more intense than hers. Mary, like one urging them on, prayed with a heart that could not be withdrawn from its object. And with all this earnestness was the knowledge that the honour of Jesus, His glory, His victory was included in her prayers. Praying for her mother's soul was only another way that had come to her of saying to Him, "Thy will be done." It was pleading His cause, to plead hers.

The little altar remained now all day uncovered; and on it was placed the picture of Our Lady holding her Divine Son, which had so often helped her mother in her pious meditations. "Oh, Mother"—for Mary, with a child-like love, could call her "Mother" from her heart—"Oh, Mother, Queen of Heaven, refuge of sinners, consolation of the afflicted; Oh, Mother, you who best know the

yearnings of the Sacred Heart, pray for her for whom that Heart shed Its most precious Blood." Hannah felt much both for herself and Mary.

But she saw in her niece a new sort of sorrow, something which seemed to her so much like hap-piness, that she did not know what to make of it. And yet Mary shed tears, and her poor heart was very sore, and she felt being left alone; and it made Hannah very sad to see her suffering such real grief so young. Yes, it was real grief; but it was not misery, or repining, or distress without consolation. She thought of her mother, where she was, so near heaven; and she could not be miserable. She thought of how her soul was helped by every prayer; and, above all, by the Masses Father Francis offered for her; and she could not but be thankful; and sometimes, when her heart was fullest of holy thoughts, she was almost glad. Hannah saw, and believed; she also wondered; and would gladly have felt the same. "Ah, we must live their life of strength, if we would have their death of consolation," she would say. And then she would sit down and cry, not for Mary Ashton and her mother, but for herself and Bob.

After the funeral, Hannah returned to Woodcote. She took leave of Mary with many kind words and much real love. And Mary was left to meet the world as Holy Mother Church should show her.



CHAPTER VI.

RATHER FAST.

ANNAH got back safely. Robert met her. She felt very proud of him, and very glad to see him. He looked rather important, and put her box into the little light spring-cart with the air of

a grown-up man. He gave the coachman something, and the man touched his hat with a smile. Hannah could hardly keep from smiling herself. But in a minute more she was sitting by Bob's side, and he had grasped the reins, and driven off the clever little pony in a way that made people say he was "an uncommon sharp boy."

While they were going through the streets, Bob merely said that he was glad to see his mother; that the day was cruelly cold; and that he wished she would take his rug to keep her warm. But as soon as they were off the stones, he turned round quickly and said: "Mother, what d'ye think? Mr. Woodcote is dead."

r, woodcole is dead.

Hannah almost screamed.

"And to be buried to-morrow," added Bob.

"Dead, and almost buried!" gasped Hannah.

"To-morrow!" repeated Bob, dropping the lash of his whip on the pony's back in a way which seemed very gentle, and felt very much the contrary; for the pony jumped forward, and Hannah cried out, "Don't, Robert; why, how can you?—And master, poor dear master—but how was it, Bob—what kind of an end did he make?"

Now, whether it was that Robert had really grown colder and harder during his mother's visit to Preston, or whether it was that the sight she had lately had of Catholic manners made her think that he was harder and colder, I cannot tell; but, at that moment, Hannah thought that she had never seen so dreadful a glance as that which her dear child threw upon her. Again the lash was dropped upon the pony's back; again the pony sprung forward; and it was a full minute before Bob spoke. Then he turned towards his mother and said, "This was his end. He had a fit in the street in London. He who picked him up found a letter in his pocket, with his direction. He was sent there in a cab, and a doctor with him. He was bled, and he opened his eyes and groaned. Also, they found his banker's book in his pocket, and some memorandums for his lawyer. So the people sent for both those gentlemen, and they came. You see, to put it short, there was plenty of cash, and the will had been made years ago; and so he died a few hours after he fell down. The whole job was put into the hands of one of the great London undertakers; and every thing has been done without giving any trouble to any body. He was brought down yesterday. And the day before there came down a lot of workmen,-really they knew how to do business;-they begun to make the great dining-room ready, and they never slept till it was done; night and day was all alike to them—that's smart; I like that, mother!"

Hannah groaned. "What did they do?" she

asked.

"They hung the room with black cloth from ceiling to floor, and put up a lot of fine things;—nobody knows the meaning of them. But I think of poor mistress—'tis sad, rather. After master left for London, she knew no more about him—never saw him again—knows no more than she can guess at beneath that black velvet, and the silver nails and coat of arms—poor thing!"

Again the pony was put to a faster pace; and Hannah spoke no more till she got home. The next day she went to the funeral. There had not been such a funeral in that neighbourhood for years. Men whom nobody knew walked in dresses, such as no one had ever seen before, and wore long melancholy faces for nothing at all. But crowds of gentry were there, and they did seem sorry; and some of them returned to Woodcote with some distant relations to see Mrs. Woodcote and read the will. And Hannah returned to her rooms at the mill to wonder what that will might be.

She did not see Robert again till towards night. When he came in, she saw directly that he had been drinking. She spoke strongly to him; but he only laughed. "There's no living without brandy," he said; "but I've had too much, I know. But never mind, that's nothing; I shall be all right again to-morrow. Those black fellows have taken down the dining-room hangings, and there's an escutcheon gone up over the front

door. And—oh, mother—the steward was present when the will was read, and there's not one word about you. It was made before father died; if father had been alive now, and in Mr. Woodcote's service, he would have had six months' wages—all the out-door men have six months' wages but you and I." Bob made a droll face, looked at his mother, and gave a long whistle.

Vexed, angry, miserable, and disappointed, Hannah could scarcely help crying. But, somehow, she did not want to cry before "that ruined unfeeling boy," as her vexed heart called him; so she restrained her feelings till he went to bed

singing a song-

"So they packed up their bundles
Both mother and son,
And went to discover
How fortunes are won."

Then Hannah's full heart poured forth its burden in torrents of tears.

The next day Mrs. Woodcote sent for her. She asked her a few questions. "Had she got her forty pounds?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am."

"Well, Bob is just like a man now. He could help to support you, of course."

"Oh yes, ma'am; no doubt about that."

"Well, then, there is the less to regret for you," said Mrs. Woodcote. "You must now, Hannah, begin life with your son. I shall continue every thing as it is for three months. The place will then be let for a term of years. I am going abroad with my children. I am going away from here next week. I may not see you again."

Hannah thanked Mrs. Woodcote for all favours.

"Have you yet thought—but perhaps it is too soon to ask—but have you thought of any thing

to do for yourself?"

"Well, yes, ma'am, I have," said Hannah; "I thought a good deal about it last night. I have never been accustomed to hard work, ma'am, as you know; and I have a little money. I have been thinking that I might take a house, and let lodgings at Seacliffe; and I think that I might start a pony-carriage; and Robert would drive it, and take care of the pony, and so be a great help to me, and do what he would like at the same time. So many families I have got to know through this house," said Hannah, looking round with a sad expression; "so many I have known, that I think they would remember me when they wanted the seaside in the summer. And you, ma'am, would mention me."

"That I will; I will recommend you every where. I can give you linen and some articles of furniture from this house; and for a parting gift take this." Mrs. Woodcote put ten sovereigns into Hannah's hand. Hannah was very much pleased, and very grateful. Linen, furniture, and ten pounds! It really was a good thing that she had kept friends with the great house.

When Robert learnt from his mother the exact state of their affairs, and heard what had passed between her and Mrs. Woodcote, he said that he was perfectly satisfied. Seacliffe was a very jolly place. It was of Seacliffe brandy that he had had a taste the night before. "How! what did he mean?" The miller lost his horses of a night

sometimes; but if he kept silence, they came back, and a small cask of brandy would be found near the house, in some convenient place, in the morning. Hannah was very much surprised; she had never heard of smuggling there before. Robert said that people had held their tongues before her, but not before him. Hannah felt rather frightened—"Had Mr. Woodcote known?" Robert burst into loud laughter, and told her to hold her tongue—she was talking nonsense.

"If I knew of any thing else that I could do, I would not go to Seacliffe," exclaimed Hannah.

"I would rather go there than to any other place in the world," said Bob. "Oh, how I enjoyed it when I was there with the ladies last summer. As soon as I am out of the sea, I want to get in again. What swimming! what boating! what fishing!—I shall be out all night sometimes—and such storms in winter! I'll be out in a storm the first chance I can get."

"Do hold your tongue, Bob; don't be so wild. I shall want you to help me. If I take a house, and furnish it, and buy a pony-chaise and pony, I shall not have a five-pound note left in the world. You must be a steady boy, a boy the gentry will like and employ. If you get a wild character, you'll be the ruin of me, and of yourself too."

Bob stood very straight and stiff, and pulled a very solemn face. "Mother," he said in a stiff, conceited voice, which made her laugh, "I'll be as steady as a rocking-horse, and as solemn as the church-clock. But let me say to you that I like this Seacliffe plan very much—I feel that it will be the making of me."

Not one word had Hannah said about her sister's death, as yet, to Bob. Now that they had talked over their future way of life, she thought that she would speak of her visit to Preston. But Robert stopped her. "Not one word of that, mother. It is all stifled in my heart now, I believe. But I can't bear to hear about it."

'Hannah did not venture to go on. But, an hour or two after, Robert, gazing earnestly into the fire, said, in an odd cold voice,

"I should like to ask a question or two."

"Whatever you please, my son."

"Aunt Ashton's dead, and buried?"

" Yes."

"Was it happy? Did she know where she was going?"

"Oh yes. Her heart was given to God."

"Mary,-very miserable?"

"No; not what you call miserable, at all."

" Resigned?"

"Yes; and happy. Her mother is alive to her still—only in another, a better place. Their religion is quite another thing to ours."

"Ours," said Bob, "ours. I have not got any."
They never spoke about it any more. Very soon Hannah had visited Seacliffe. Without much trouble she found a house which suited her. It was on the cliff, had a south aspect, a magnificent view of the sea, and was just of the right size. She took the house for five years. It had always been used as a lodging-house, and had been a very popular one. March saw her settled in this house, and every thing looked very nice. Mrs. Woodcote had made her some very

handsome presents, and so many that she had her house sufficiently furnished without buying any thing new. After Mrs. Woodcote left the great house, some things, which the new tenant did not require, were sold; among them was Miss Emma's beautiful little pony carriage; and Hannah had the pleasure and glory of buying it, and the harness, with the very ten pounds that Mrs. Woodcote had given to her. Robert was extremely pleased. A pony was purchased for five pounds more; Robert directed the necessary change of pole for shafts, and saw his turn-out quite complete.

As soon as Hannah was ready for lodgers, they came to her. Every thing was done so well, and every body was so pleased, both with her and Bob, and Mrs. Woodcote had written so many letters recommending them, that they were not without lodgers a week together for the whole summer and autumn. By November Hannah felt herself quite rich, and settled in a very respectable station of life.

station of life.

station of life.

Robert was now in his seventeenth year. The winter had come, and winter-idleness. But Bob was not of a nature to be idle. He joined the fishermen in their work, day or night. Danger was delightful to him. He was a very popular person; and this his mother found to her cost; for many a bill she had to pay for "treats" at publichouses, and many a night she sat up, alone, listening with a quaking heart to the wind and waves, and waiting for Bob. She did not keep a servant in the winter, and these lonely hours were a sorrowful contrast to the full house, bustling days, and merry voices of summer.

But spring came again, and Hannah was glad. Lodgers came too; and again they were busy, and Bob was happy with his pony and carriage, and sometimes driving all the day long.

Again another winter, and a winter more trying than the last. Bob is a year older, and no mother can restrain him now. He has formed some desperate acquaintances. He is often out whole nights and days; and Hannah is obliged to take a young girl to live with her, for she cannot bear that lonely life.

Sometimes Bob borrows money of her, and she dare not refuse, for fear of driving him to more desperate courses; and often he pays her back again-oftener than not-and the sums are large, five pounds at a time sometimes, and Hannah dare not refuse to take it; for she dreads to inquire how he gets such sums. So she lets things take their course, and longs for summer to come once more.

And again the sun shines warm, and people flock to Seacliffe, and Hannah's house is full. She has now been there more than two years, and is very well known, and always liked. But Robert is not the same. He has taught a boy called Anthony Davidson to drive; and as Anthony is very fond of the work, and very clever at it, the lodgers make no objection. And Robert is often from home a week at a time. When he comes back, he says he has been at sea; and he always tells his mother not to talk about him, or she will get into trouble.

Another lonely winter, - a winter of storms. But no storm without is so terrible as the inward storm in Hannah's breast. She knows more now. Tony is a very engaging child-another such, she fancies, as her Bob was once. She talks to him of being good. He laughs at her ideas of goodness. The boy is only thirteen years old, and yet she hears from him of things that frighten her. She knows now that Tony is the son of one of the most desperate smugglers on the coast. That his tender years are taken advantage of both by his father and her own son; and, knowing that he will not be suspected, he is employed to carry messages, by which arrangements are made which not only break the law, but peril lives. Her own loft and stable have been made the depository of smuggled goods, and they have used her good character to veil their evil practices. But she does not dare to tell Bob that she knows all this,—she is getting quite afraid of him.

Again a busy summer. It is the third that she has spent there. It goes on just like the last; only Tony does not now return every night to his cottage-home, down the coast about a mile, in a village called Cragside, but lives with Hannah; for Bob is as often away as at home. She often hears, through Tony, that there is danger; that he must let somebody know something before a certain hour. She lets the child do as he likes. He is already too old for her to manage, and too wily for her to understand. But for one thing she loves that boy dearly. He loves her Robert with a love that makes the child a willing slave to him. And when Robert is at home, he shows great love for the boy, and praises him as the bravest, hardiest boy in the world, and admires him as the cleverest. There is not any thing that Robert asks of Tony, that the boy will not try to do.

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It was awful to see the child climb the cliff for sea-birds' eggs; it was awful, again, to see him spring from the rocks into the sea, and rise like a cork, with a shout and a laugh, playing in the water as if there could be no danger in the waves for him. All this Robert loved. He could almost do as well himself, it is true; but he did not admire it in Tony at all the less for that. So Hannah loves the boy because he loves Bob, and Bob loves him. And yet she has a mysterious fear of the young creature, and dreads the harm that may come to her son through the boy's father and that father's associates. The summer has brought money. The forty pounds have become a hundred. But Hannah has known no peace of heart for very long now, and life has lost its pleasure, and offers her nothing but fear.





CHAPTER VIL

FULL SPEED.

HE downward way is always fast. It quickens as it goes; and then, perhaps, comes a slide, an unexpected slide,—the traveller on this way is down some slippery steep before he

knows where he is; he is bruised, and cut, and wounded, in his terrible passage, and is even surprised to find himself in such depths of danger; he looks up in misery; how shall he ever get back to the firm ground, the straight path, the way of safety which once was his? He cannot climb by himself that slippery steep, and get to his childhood's home once more. He can never get back by himself:—what is he to do?

Robert knew that he was on the downward way; but, as we have described, he could not stop. He went faster and faster; got lower and lower; and

felt that he could not help it.

It is certainly true that sometimes, at first, just perhaps as he was entering on some desperate act, he would suddenly think of his childhood at the cottage, and of how his innocent heart warmed at the thought of the happiness of being the servant of God—of how then he believed in Jesus on the Cross, and felt that it must be man's greatest glory to try to be worthy of so awful a sacrifice. But it is also true that, in a sort of hasty misery, he had always put the idea from him, and that at last he had succeeded in driving it from his mind altogether. There was nothing to restrain him now.

Robert had not been at home for several days. Hannah neither knew where he was, or when to expect him. She thought that something was doing; for Tony would be away for hours at a time, and then back again, in a mysterious way, about which she had grown too used to inquire. It was the end of November. The evenings got dark very early now. A gentleman called Lennox, with his wife and children, were lodging with her. They had been with her several times before, and she had got to know them very well. Hannah was standing at a table in her front kitchen, busy at some clear-starching for Mrs. Lennox. There was a candle lighted on the table. Mr. Lennox came into the room. He entered from the back-door, saying, "Let me come this way, Mrs. May."

Tony had entered quietly the moment before. He was standing by Hannah's side, still and

silent.

"I saw your son in the lane an hour ago," said Mr. Lennox. The clock struck six.

"Indeed, sir. I'm very glad."

"He was holding your pretty pony by the rein." Neither of them saw how Tony's eyes flashed, or the expression of acute interest in his averted, yet listening face. "Is he coming home to-night, I wonder?" said Hannah.

"I don't know; we only said good night to each

other," said Mr. Lennox.

A very odd look came over Tony's face. "He is going to Moreton first, Mrs. May; he won't be here till ten or eleven o'clock," he said.

"Why did you not tell me, you silly boy?"

exclaimed Hannah sharply.

"Why, I only came in just as Mr. Lennox did," answered Tony. "I wasn't to interrupt the gentle-

man, I suppose!"

Tony walked out through the court and garden with rather a sullen step. But no sooner was he out of Hannah's sight than his speed was like a bird's flight, and another moment brought him to a hut in the orchard beyond. Up sprung Bob from some straw in a corner, as Tony gave a low whistle at the entrance. Then Tony threw himself at Bob's feet.

"Mr. Lennox has taken father for you," he exclaimed. "He could swear that he spoke to you, and you to him, an hour ago, in the lane, with the pony. He has told Mrs. May so; I said you were gone to Moreton, and would be back by ten. Now, go to Moreton; make some errand there. Get seen by two or three people. Go as fast as you can. Father was to leave the pony at Joe Smith's for me to bring back. Bring it back yourself, and all may go right."

A hasty word of praise from Bob was all that followed. He started with the speed of a hare. He cleared ditch and climbed fence. Soon he was lost to Tony, who then went back to the house. Tony had saved Bob's life. He had not been lazily

lolling two minutes by the back door before quick steps were heard, and two policemen appeared.

"Oh my! What's up?" was Tony's salutation; at the same time rubbing his hands, jumping about, and showing various symptoms of enjoyment and delight.

"Here, young fellow—where's your master?"
"Master?" cried Tony; "my master? 'Pon my word, I can't tell. Never saw him yet, to my knowledge."

"You young impudence—where's Robert May, then?"

"Sorry he is not at home; but he's gone to Moreton.

" How long has he been gone?"

"An hour and a half; about five o'clock he started from the stable with the pony."

"You are lying!" said one of the men.

"What's the use of talking to me, then?" asked Tony.

Hannah came out. The sight of the men puzzled and frightened her. Tony went on making jokes, till Hannah grew seriously angry with him. "Is it nothing to have policemen come here after my son at this time of night?" she exclaimed.

"Ask what they want of him," said Tony. " Ask why they did not come an hour and a half ago, when they might have seen him, at least in the lane, as Mr. Lennox did. Or ask why they don't volunteer to supper; for you know he promised to be back at ten o'clock."

It was now explained to Hannah that a smuggling vessel had come in at Cragside that afternoon, that little more than an hour and a half before, there had been a serious fray between the smugglers and the men of the coast-guard, and that one of the coast-guard men had been killed; and killed, it was said, by her son.

At this moment of trial Hannah was calm and quiet. She had long expected that Bob would fall into some trouble, but she fancied that the bad time had not come yet. She relied on what Mr. Lennox had said to her. She sent for Mr. Lennox. He said again that he had seen and spoken to Bob about five o'clock, in the lane. The policemen remained in the house till Bob returned. Of course, he was not surprised to see them. They showed their warrant for taking him into custody, and he left the house with them, assuring his mother that all would be right, for that there was nothing against him.

Still calm and quiet, Hannah awaited the result of the magistrate's examination. Her son was discharged. He had sworn to an account of himself, which was corroborated on oath by Tony, and by Mr. Lennox also. Still, he had a lecture from the magistrate, and was advised to give up his bad associates, and to recollect himself in time; for that now he had been for many years WELL KNOWN

TO THE POLICE.

But there lay the dead man—and who had killed him? Alas! Robert May had done it. Yes, he had killed that man; and he had sworn falsely, and allowed Tony to swear falsely, to save his character before men. And when Mr. and Mrs. Lennox were gone, and winter was come, and he and his mother were sitting one dark night alone, he told her the truth.

Once before he had told her of a sin—once before, sitting by the fire, close to her side. But what a change! Now, he told her not to mind—that it was of no use thinking of it—that it was nothing at all. And Hannah heard in horror,—horror at the idea of that murder; and yet there was in her heart a deeper horror still—that now Robert couldn't repent.

The winter went on: Bob was a good deal at home. But he was very dull, and complained sadly of having nothing to do. Again his mother found him leaving her for many days at a time; and again she learnt through Tony of his having returned to his former pursuits, and being at sea with his father.

And now a desperate enterprise had to be carried through, and Bob must take a part in it. One of the smuggling party had been giving evidence against his companions: several were lodged in gaol in consequence. David Davidson had undertaken to carry off the man on whose evidence their conviction depended, and keep him on the coast of France till the trial was over. David and his boy Tony had helped Bob in his hour of danger; now he must help them in this enterprise. He readily agreed to join in it.

With the capture of the man Bob had nothing to do. But one night, at a certain signal, he was down on the Seacliffe beach, and soon on board a large boat, in which, with two other men, he was to make for the French coast. The man who had turned evidence against them was there, sullen and quiet, convinced of his only safety being in submission, knowing that it was too late to re-

sist; and trusting those men too; for they had told him that he should return. The man's name was Adam Mills.

Davidson said they must go to Cragside; that Tony was to meet them there. The night was fine and light: men were going out to the deep fishing. They attracted no notice; and Adam Mills would not have ventured even a sign in his own defence, so surely did he know that it would cost him his life. Now, to get a boat, of the size of that in which these men were, close to the shore at Cragside, was not an easy thing. But it could be done by those who intimately knew that coast and its dangers. A point of land called Cragshead jutted out into the sea. The sides of the rock were polished with the breaking of the water; and amongst the broken masses above, the eye caught an irregular zigzag path, which descended by steps and slopes to the high-water mark, where the rock was worn to marble. Beneath was the still water, clear to its greatest depths, and showing through its lucid green huge masses of rock, all trimmed and feathered with the waving seaweed, which spread its foliage and cast its clinging roots among them.

Here lay the boat in safety; and in a moment Tony, running and springing, came down that narrow path, and stood close by them. His father spoke to him of food and drink. The boy produced the supplies from a spot where they had been previously stored; but Tony gave a cry, and pointed upwards with his hand. Adam Mills had escaped. He was scaling the rock straight up its rugged side, and he had nearly gained the path

by which Tony had come down. "Stop him," cried Davidson. The boy began to climb the rock at his father's word; leaving the path, he directed his steps so as to get before Adam, and stop him in his way. It was wonderful to see how he held by hands and feet. His progress was as swift as the goat's in its native haunts, and as sure. In a few moments the boy stood in advance of Adam in the path. And there the child stood, and faced round, and waved his hand, as commanding the man to stop. The man did stop—just for one moment he stopped: it was an awful sight to see in the bright moonlight, which made the water look like silver, and deepened the shadows to a jet-like black. The man stopped, but it was to point below, with a sign which said that he would throw the boy over if he did not move away.

But Tony sprang into the air, and cut capers with his agile limbs, and returned with a firm footing to the narrow path on which he stood.

It was impossible to pass him. On one side the rock rose like a wall; on the other, fell the precipice to the sea. But Adam could not go back.

"Surrender," cried the boy, as loud as he dared to utter it. "See, father is coming." Davidson was rushing up the path to the rescue of his child.

"Stand close against the rock, and give me way to pass," said Adam. "I tell you that I will pass. If you do not step aside, you must die. Will you let me pass?"

"No!" cried Tony. And they who heard him shuddered, for they thought it was his death-doom. Adam sprang forward; he was within a yard of the child, and yet that boy stood firm. Once more

he pointed below, where, with the rising tide, the waves lifted heavily with a lengthened mournful sound. Once more Tony waved his young arm in defiance. Another moment, and the man had passed by, and the child was gone. And, as it were at the same moment, there was a startling plash in the deep clear sea—a cry of agony from Davidson—the quick crack of a pistol; and Adam Mills stopped in his way, and lying, as if dead, across the path.

Tony had known where his safety lay. Just at the moment when his danger had become certain, he had sprung from the rock to the water, which had seemed to lift up its waves high to receive him. Before the smoke of the pistol had cleared

away, he was safe.

Bob gazed with steadfast eyes on Mills: he was not dead; he raised a hand for help. Without a second thought, Bob gained the path, and rapidly ascended to him. He heard Davidson call—command—threaten. He gave no thought to any thing but the faint motions of the beckoning hand. Bob did not see what the men in the boat saw—he did not see that the sound of the pistol had brought people to the edge of the cliff, and that some were coming quickly down to Mills. Bob reached him first; but he had hardly raised the man up from the ground, when a hand was laid upon him, and he was a prisoner to the coast-guard captain. At the same instant Davidson, from the boat, sent a pistol-ball which whizzed past the officer, close by and harmlessly. It was directly answered from a height above them, and Davidson dropped with an arm shattered to pieces.

The men with the boat escaped; but day dawned on Bob in prison. There was no want of evidence now. Mills recovered; and there was a great deal to tell. Hannah read in the newspapers the explanation of a score of things which had been mysteries to her till then; she learnt from them the story of the bad life of her son. She saw him in gaol as often as she was allowed to see him. The time of the trial was fixed: Hannah did all for him that a mother's heart and a hundred pounds could do. But Bob was sentenced to be transported for fourteen years.





CHAPTER VIII.

FAREWELL.

marked that Robert May was a youth of excellent natural dispositions, and that his ruin was because of life, vigour, and generosity thrown away, let him remark it now. If any parent, having read

thus far, should feel inclined to look upon his own boy, and think that he is naturally better than Bob, I must tell him that he is not. If any body says that their child shall be kept out of the way of Bob's temptations, I answer, that won't do: it isn't enough. When our Lord Jesus Christ had redeemed mankind upon the Cross on Calvarywhen He had risen from the grave in which His infinite love and His infinite condescension had laid Him, before His ascension into heaven, He settled His Church upon earth. His Apostles were commissioned to preach the Gospel and to plant the Church; and they did it. Does any body want to know what the Apostles taught? Let him buy the Catholic penny Catechism, and he will see. For the Church is God's work, and is never out of His care; it does God's will; and cannot change its teaching, because there is no change

in the will of God. The bishops and priests of the Catholic Church are now teaching the same Gospel, and ministering in the same Church, which was preached and planted by the Apostles. All over the world they are doing God's work, as those did who were before them, and as others shall do who will come after them, until the end of the world.

And therefore, parents who may read this little book, I say to you, that all your care will not be enough, unless your child is a member of the one holy Catholic Church, which was founded by the living God, and is the dispenser of His grace; there is neither strength nor safety out of it. What I have now said to you, Hannah believed to be true.

A bitter trial of her own strength, a terrible experience of the power of sin over those who are not in the Church, had brought her to believe that her sister's religion was the only true one. But Robert's heart had grown hard now; and not all she could do would ever change it. But Hannah felt her fault. She never reproached Bob. She said within herself that hundreds and hundreds were lost like him in England every week. Yet not one word could she ever say to Bob about religion; it was not for her to say any thing about that. And all the time, the thought of his hard heart, his cold soul, and his long and terrible punishment, fell upon her cruelly, and made her old and haggard; every month she lived was as a year out of her life.

Once, however, before the convict-ship sailed, Hannah said something—gave a desperate, trembling, miserable sort of hint at what was right.

It was during her last interview with her son. It was on board the vessel, where she was allowed to bid him good-bye. Poor worn-down woman—humbled now indeed—she stood by him, and looked away from his chained limbs up to the face she had so loved and admired. He, too, looked steadily on her. She cast her eyes toward another part of the ship, and his eyes followed her's.

Among the soldiers who formed the convicts' guard there were a few Catholics. A priest had come on board to bid them good-bye. He was speaking to two children; and one, a boy, knelt down and got his blessing. As the boy knelt, Hannah turned to Bob, and said convulsively, "Oh, if you!"—she could not go on. Something seemed to choke her. Bob answered, with dreadful quietness, "The days of the young boy in the cot-tage at Woodcote are gone; can never come back!" Hannah sunk down upon a trunk that stood by, and wept most bitterly.

"Mother," said Bob, "try to cheer up. I have not been able to say much to comfort you, I know. But nothing passes quicker than time. Make the best of it. When fourteen years are over, we will

forget to-day."

Hannah gazed at him with streaming eyes. She scarcely heard what he said. She was looking at his fine face, his strong figure; she was thinking that he was the finest young man of twenty-one and a half that eyes had ever looked upon. She thought of his cleverness, his extraordinary strength and courage. What a man he was! and he, too, her son, her only child. How was it possible to believe that in half an hour she should be walking the earth worse than childless? He a convict! How was it that she looked on him and lived!

She did live. She lived to receive his last kiss, to let his hand go for the last time, to see his last sad smile, to lose sight of him, of all; of the vessel itself, as it seemed, far off upon the sea, to pass away into the clouds. Hannah never took her eyes away till there was no more to see. Then she went to her poor little lodging—so poor and mean, for she had not a pound in the world. And yet, before she lay down that night, she had taken compassion on a destitute boy—Tony! His father had died in gaol, after a very short illness. Tony had got away from some sort of "Reformatory Protestant School." "That sort of thing was not going to do him any good; he was very sure of that."





CHAPTER IX.

THE DEEP WATERS.

r what was Robert thinking? He had put a calm face on things before his mother; but what really were his thoughts?

It is impossible to describe the anger that lay at the bottom of his heart against every thing and every body, or the deep malice that mingled with it. "How was it that one like him was where he was?" That question would rise up. Every moment it urged for an answer. Every hour a maddening despair grew upon him, because angry curses were not an answer; and there was for him neither reason for the past, nor hope for the future. He was considered the worst-disposed convict in the vessel. He saw that it was so: and he didn't care. Days and weeks passed. Every thing was the same to Bob. If the voyage could have lasted for ever, he would not have cared. Any thing was better than convict life; and notwithstanding what he had said to his mother, fourteen years was like for ever to him. He made no friends. He was hated, and, in a way, feared. A young giant in power of limb, and in heart bad, thoroughly bad. Never to be softened by kindness, or to be willingly submissive to rule; bad, thoroughly bad; one from whom even the wicked shrunk away instinctively, as something really worse than themselves. Once at sea, the convicts were relieved of their chains. But they were having a bad voyage. Difficulties arose in the management of the ship. Some even among the convicts, who knew what a vessel ought to do, declared that the thing they then were in was scarcely sea-worthy. Still, amid trouble and fear, if not absolute danger, they made their way. Robert expected shipwreck; he felt sure that in the event of a serious storm they should be lost. He scarcely cared about it.

Some one asked him once if he could swim? Robert laughed as he answered "Yes. But," he added, "I suppose that I could sink too, if I liked it. I have nothing to live for; and as to death—who knows any thing about it?—or what comes after it?—or if any thing comes after it?" In spite of fears, however, they reached the Cape. They were to stay at anchor for a few days. Invitations came from the officers on shore to the officers on board the vessel, and were accepted. The younger went the first day, the elder were to go the next. The next day came: and after the departure from the vessel of those who were to go on shore, there rose a severe and sudden storm.

Those who watched from the shore saw that vessel break from her anchors, and become in one moment quite unmanageable, the sport of wind and waves. It was plain what the end must be. And the end came rapidly. A crowd of persons ga2 I

thered on the shore, watched the shipwreck, and saw that vessel break to pieces on the waves, as if she had been made of biscuit. Every boat that could brave the storm went out; and many brought their living cargoes safe to land. But there was not time to save all, even if there had been boats and men to do the work. It was as fierce a battle of life and death as had ever been fought upon the waves. A telescope showed the water alive with human beings. In their struggles they upset the boats that were sent to save them; and that sight made others fear to go.

It was hard to see unnecessary loss of life; but who would not try again and again, while the cry of hundreds went up to heaven, and made earth echo with their fear? Brave hearts were not wanting. But time-oh, time! Would there not be time for the boats to return, to save still more from the struggling death of that terrible grave? No: there would not be time. From the battling waves, from the floating timbers, from the little that held together of the vessel, hundreds heard and knew that there could be no return of hope to them. Some calm ones spoke and said "farewell!" Yes, farewell! Those watchers from the shore saw all that must come to pass, and now strained their eyes and fixed their telescopes to see-not who should be saved—but how those who were left would die.

"They are going down by scores. The water is comparatively calm round that bit of the wreck now; see, three are clinging to that spar to the left; but they are gone. How the waves swamped that there is no one on it now. Oh, what a

cry!" Such were the words that told of the fate of those who were left behind. The bravest men turned sickening away, and yet looked again immediately; so awful was the interest.

Still the storm blew high, and the waves beat in upon the shore with a roar as of unsatisfied wrath. But in the last few minutes the cries of men and women in their drowning agonies had ceased to reach the land. A large number of those who had witnessed the dreadful scene, now nearly closed, had turned to relieve their own minds, by ministering to their fellow-creatures' sufferings. All houses and all hearts were open to those who were saved. But still some few persons, forming groups under such shelter as they could find, directed their glasses to the floating portions of the wreck, and from time to time described what they saw to those who stood around them. These persons had for the last few minutes been watching one poor being who was now the last left on the wreck. It was Robert. He had made no attempt to get into any of the boats, though he had helped others to reach them. He had got with three others to the highest part of that small portion of the wreck which still held together and remained above water. Of his companions, two had tried to save their lives by casting themselves into the sea, and swimming to a floating mast. Bob had seen both of them fail and die. The other had been washed away from his side by a wave, which had overwhelmed them both. And now he was alone; but not in safety. He felt the timbers separating beneath him. He knew that in a moment, if he stayed there, he should be carried down into the gulf beneath.

"Now—he stands up; he is going to fling him-self over. No—that was a bold spring; he rises to the surface. Do you not see him?" Such were the words of the watchmen from the land. All hearts beat. All eyes were towards him. All interests were now centered on this one life. They went on: "He has a better chance now than a quarter of an hour ago, when the sea was boiling with them—poor fellows! He has a clearer way now. Do you see him still? Yes. How he swims! He breasts the waves like a water-dog. Did you ever see such power?" But, alas, the watchers stop and shudder. The strength of the swimmer fails. A wave strikes him. Can he recover it? More and more intense grows the interest. There are cries for a boat. Who will venture for one man? Besides, he is lost sight of. No mortal being could swim that distance in that sea. He is seen no more. Some lay their glasses down, and walk away with heavy hearts. Others still gaze; look and look again; they cannot bear to give him up. But the bravest heart could never bear, the strongest life could not survive, that trial.

And truly Bob's heart had fainted. Knocked about among the floating portions of the wreck, buffeted by wind and wave, he had no longer any heart for the struggle. And what was he struggling for? A ruined, disgraced, and angry man-a sinner before God, and an outcast upon the earth-what was there in life for him, that he should struggle for it? There, in that crisis, the thought came to him, and he said, "I will die!"—Angry, at war with God, was that a time to die?

Quick as the despairing thought came, some-thing came and quenched it. What has he heard,

what has he seen? Why, in that very moment, do his limbs move with greater vigour than ever? What has put into him such new strength and life? Why does he seem, with an almost supernatural energy, to lift himself in the water, to look around, to resolve, and to act? And what does he do?

Those who had sought him from the shore for the last long minute and not seen him, now saw him again. "There—there!" they cry, "that is he; he is as strong as ever. But, see—what does it mean! He is not coming on; he turns aside."

Yes, he turns aside indeed. In that moment of despair he had heard a voice cry out, "Mother of God!" It was a woman's voice. He saw a pale face; he saw an arm raised, as if to seek for help, and then it dropped again. But wound round the wrist and hand was a rosary; and the crucifix, small as it was, sparkled amid the sea-foam; and back to his mind came the days at the cottage, and up from his heart went an act of faith. Sinner as he was, he saw his Saviour's image; he saw, and once more believed.

He will not die now; nor shall that woman either, if he can help it. A strong stroke brings him to her; she is sinking—she is insensible; perhaps it was her last cry. A shawl is bound strongly round her, and tied in a knot. He lays hold of it with his teeth. Again he turns, again he breasts the waves, and again and again his heart goes on repeating, "Mother of God!" God's power, His justice, His mercy, His love; the Incarnation, the Cross,—all come before him with those words. What has become of his despair of heart, his fatigue of limb? Both are gone together!

And what are the watchers saying on the shore?

They have seen him take the woman; they see him bringing her on; they are half mad with delight. Twenty men would risk their lives to save his now. It is indeed like a miracle of courage; it is an agony of excitement to watch him. He loses the woman; she seems to sink or float aside. He turns again, again battles with the waves, again gets hold of her, and labours on—but slower and slower, for human strength is ebbing fast. But now there is help at hand. Just before it is too late, a boat advances, ropes are flung to him,—and both are safe.





CHAPTER X.

INSTRUCTION AND CONSOLATION.



EAR reader, you must come to the side of a small bed in a hospital-ward; for there lies Bob. He has been very ill; and during this illness has been at times delirious. But he is better now,

lying calm and still, but pale and very weak. He is now able to talk about the wreck, and to ask after the woman he saved, and to be promised that he shall see her.

She is an Irish woman, and was the wife of one of the soldiers; but she is a widow and childless now. When she comes to see Bob, he is very much pleased. His heart warms towards her—he tells her so—"because of that rosary," he adds; "for that certainly saved us both." "You are a Catholic then, of course," says the woman. She is very sad, and she too has been ill, and the mere sight of Bob brings back that time of horror; so she trembles, and can hardly speak, though she has determined to bear up as well as she can, and to thank him for saving her life, sorrowful as that life is likely to be.

"No, I am not a Catholic," answers Bob. And

then he tells the woman all about little Mary's rosary, and much more that the reader already knows. As Bob goes on, the woman lifts her hands and weeps, and utters little prayers, yet always the same. "Oh, that you could see a priest! oh, you ought to see a priest! The Lord send you a priest! Now may you not be long before you see a priest. Mother of Mercy, send you a priest!"

This strikes Bob as very wonderful. He goes on with his story, for it is a pleasure to him to tell it; but still, as he speaks, she softly, and at every point of most interest, repeats something about his seeing a priest. So, when Bob has finished, he says plainly, "And now, my dear friend, tell me what good it would do me to see a priest." And plainly she answers him, "You would be received into the Church; you would confess your sins to the priest, and receive absolution."

"And receive absolution?" repeated Bob, as if he could not understand it.

"God gave to His priests the power of forgiving sins," the woman answers. "Don't you know about it?"

"I know next to nothing," said Bob. "Go on."

"In the Sacrament of Orders the priest receives power to say Mass, which means the changing of the bread and wine by the words of consecration into the real Body and Blood of Christ, and to offer it up as a sacrifice for the living and the dead. None but a priest can do that. You believe that?"

"Yes: I know about that. Somewhere, now, there is the Bible that I had as a child, and the

words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in the first chapter, are marked in it. I can say them: 'The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the Blood of Christ; the bread which we break is the communion of the Body of Christ."

"Yes," added the woman; "and they who will not receive this Sacrament shall not have life in them. And they who do receive it abide in Christ, and Christ in them. Now you see what good a priest would do to you, if you could receive the Blessed Sacrament."

"Oh, yes," said Bob. "But something must happen before that; I feel that plainly enough. I can no longer speak as I spoke as a child; I can no longer offer an innocent loving soul to God. The language that then burst forth from my heart, quite naturally, as it were, I can never use again."

"That's true," said the good woman. "But God has taught your soul another language: I say that He has taught it to you, because you may depend upon it that nothing but His grace has ever brought you to this moment. God, then, has taught you another language, - and this is it: 'Jesus, Thou art the physician of my soul; I am that sick man whom Thou camest from heaven to heal. Oh, heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee. Jesus, Thou art the Good Shepherd: behold, I am that sheep that was lost; take me now upon Thy shoulders, and carry me home.' Does not your soul say that?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" cried Robert, clasping her hand, and the tears rolling down his face. "Yes, yes, I can say that; I can say it with all my heart."

"And now, with your penitent heart, would it

not be good for you to go to confession—to go to a priest? for Jesus left His word with them, 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.' And think of how a priest would teach and guide you. 'He that hears you, hears Me,' says our Blessed Lord to them. Oh, I'll pray that you may soon see a priest: you would never put off being a Catholic if you had the opportunity, would you?"

"No, I would not," said Bob, firmly. "If ever I have the opportunity, I will certainly join the

Church; and in the mean time-"

"In the mean time," interrupted the woman, "pray for him, O Holy Mother of God, that he may be made worthy of the promises of Christ."

"Yes, that is the right thing to say: I feel and know it. Really," he said, with a sigh and a smile, "really I almost fancy that something of the old feelings at the cottage at Woodcote may come back to my poor soul, notwithstanding all that it has gone through."

"Don't doubt it," said the woman cheerfully.

"But," she went on, "I am going back to England in a vessel that sails to-morrow. I have had great kindness shown to me. I hear that you will sail for Sydney next week, most likely. Now, is there any thing I can do for you when I get home? Hard or easy, I will do any thing you wish, if it's possible to be done."

"I was so hardened when I left, that I behaved badly," said Bob; "so badly, that I had no heart to ask my poor mother what was to become of her, or where she was going to live. But somewhere in the old country there is a woman called Hannah May; and if, through any thing that I have told you, you are able to find her out, tell herwhy, tell her all that has passed now by this bedside: it will be her best comfort."

" If she is in England, Sophy Noble will find her. Consider that Hannah May and Sophy Noble are friends from this moment. Is there any

thing else?"

Robert could not help smiling at the unreasonableness, as it seemed to him, of what he was going to say. "There is somewhere a boy called Anthony Davidson. His father, if he lives, is called David Davidson. That boy, by false swearing, once saved my life. Find him, if you can; and do him all the good you are able."

"Depend upon it, I will," said Mrs. Noble.

"Any thing else?"

"No, no; nothing else. But it strikes me that if you were to write a letter to a cousin of mine, Mary Ashton, of Preston in Lancashire, that you might hear something of my mother; but it is only a chance."

"Thank you for telling me. Is that really all? I shall write to you. You will hear of or from

me soon; I am sure you will."

And so they bid each other good-bye. And Mrs. Noble left Bob, having instructed him and comforted herself.

She sailed for England the next day. She took with her a document, which had made her say to Bob that he should hear of her again. It was an account of what he had done, with the highest commendations of his conduct, signed by a great number of people, and being no less than a petition to the Crown for a free pardon. But, kindly and wisely, this was not told to Bob; and he never once thought of the happiness that was possibly in store for him.

In a few weeks he was at Sydney, and immediately placed with other convicts, and hard worked at convict labour.

He very soon discovered that a man, at whose side he was frequently placed, was a Catholic. He found it out by his making a sign which Bob had often made as a child—the sign of the Cross. After some time Bob spoke to him. The man started at the first words that were uttered:

" Do you ever see a priest?" said Bob.

"Yes; but what's that to you?"

" Salvation," he replied.

"Glory be to God!" said the man. "I don't often get such an answer as that here. But whether you see a priest here or not, that strong faith and desire will be remembered by the Lord in heaven."

"But you think there is a hope of my seeing a

priest here?" urged Robert.

"About Easter," answered the man. "We are not forgotten. We shall be sure to make our Easter by a good confession, at least."

" Are you happy here?" asked Bob.

"Yes; now. My sentence was just. I have no right to complain. I sinned against knowledge. I was a born Catholic, and when I was transported for life..."

" For life!" echoed Bob.

"For life," the man went on, "I hope that the slavery of my body saved my soul; and I believe it did too. So, if God's grace has turned my great punishment into my good friend, I ought to be happy, as I am."

From that moment Bob became contented, and willing to suffer. He loved that man well. And when Easter came, they saw a priest, and Bob was received into the Church.

We must now see what Mrs. Noble has been about. The petition with which she was intrusted was only a duplicate of one which had been sent to England in a more formal manner. But she was provided with letters to some persons of high rank and power, which she was to send; and after sending these, she was ordered to appear herself, show her petition, and give her own account of what had happened. She did this. The Secretary of State for the Home Department consented to lay the case before the Sovereign, and a pardon was granted. But all this took time; Bob had been a convict for a year before he knew of his happiness.

In the mean time, Mrs. Noble, who had been set up by some of her new friends as a washerwoman in the neighbourhood of London, was busy in her search after Hannah. She made inquiries at Preston; but Mary was married and gone. She saved her little earnings, and went herself to Woodcote and Seacliffe. But Hannah was gone, no one knew where. She worked hard, lived poor, and was insufficiently clothed, that she might spend every penny she could get in attempts to find Hannah. But all was useless. One thing more, certainly, Sophy did; she prayed. Every day she prayed that the Mother of God would re-

member Bob's mother, and obtain an answer to the prayer of that poor penitent convict's heart. But months went on, and no answer came to Sophy Noble. However, she neither lost faith nor perseverance; and an answer did come at last, and

came in this way.

One day Mrs. Noble went to the house of a lady in London with some baby-clothes which she had been washing. She sat down in the kitchen while they were taken upstairs by the under-nurse. Then came a message that she was to wait for some Sophy Noble waited a long time. She was in the way in the kitchen, and the cook showed her into a servants' hall. There she saw some newspapers. She took one up, and in the policereports her eye caught these words: "Astonishing juvenile depravity." She read on, and found that it was about a boy called Anthony Davidson. Now there was hope of finding out Hannah May! She thanked God first, and then burst out crying. When she could read again, she found that this boy had been brought before the magistrate for stealing a pocket-handkerchief. But he had been well known to the police for many months. He was not a London boy; he had come up from the country; and for cleverness and impudence was unrivalled. The magistrate had doubted his being sixteen years of age, as he was so small. Tony had answered, that small bodies and large brains belonged to such as him—the bright little diamonds of the English nation, who had no homes, no trades, no money, no teaching, no friends. He hoped the magistrate would not send him to prison; for that he had a good deal to do in providing for an old woman, who had been brought up worse than himself-with many of his misfortunes, and nothing of his iniquity. He was asked if he had any religion. Not at present, he had said: there were so many; he couldn't make up his mind; though he was so old, he was not old enough to decide a question upon which so many persons disagree. He would like to hear the magistrate's opinion on that subject, and wondered if it would agree with the policeman's. Tony said also that he had brought a witness to his character. And though the announcement was received with a smile, a witness appeared in the person of a poorly-clad but wellspoken woman—Hannah May herself. Tony was sent to prison for a fortnight. Mrs. Noble did not care for that. Her joy at seeing Hannah May's residence given—a lodging in an obscure place—made her indifferent to every thing else.

That very day she saw her.

Up a dirty staircase, past two sets of rooms, inhabited by people dirty, noisy, thoughtless, and wretchedly poor; and then through a door on the left-hand into a room large and low, used for sleeping and living, containing a miserable-looking bed upon the floor, the bedding as dirty as might be expected from the situation; no table, two rickety chairs, and a stool. In a corner, water-cresses in a tub, and a few garden vegetables; on a shelf some earthenware, every piece of which was cracked or broken. On a rope stretched across the room, a few articles of clothing drying; in the fireplace, a handful of red coal and a saucepanful of hot-water;—and, standing with her back to the door, busy at a washing-

tub, was a thin sickly-looking woman, with a short ragged brown stuff petticoat tied round her, and an old blue shawl pinned round her neck and shoulders, and with naked feet thrust into shoes which scarcely deserved the name. "I want Mrs.

May," said Sophy Noble.

The woman turned round; she wiped her reeking arms upon a rag which hung from the line. "You want me then," she answered. Sophy Noble was too kind to express surprise; she had expected to find her poor, but not like this. "I bring you a message and good news from one you love." Hannah looked agitated: "Then tell me quickly; I am weak and heart-broken with want and trouble. You come from Bob. But the vessel was wrecked: I never heard it till the street-criers gave the whole story in the court yonder, and I was struck with a sort of a palsy. But I am better now—but why don't you speak? Oh, speak!—tell me what you mean." And Hannah sat down on the little stool, and rocked herself backwards and forwards, and cried piteously.

Sophy pulled forward a chair, sat down by her, took her trembling hand, and kissed it many times. And in the intervals of these caresses she said: "The shipwreck was true: I was there; I was on board. Your Bob saved my life, and behaved like—like—"

"Like himself," cried Hannah, throwing her arms round Sophy, and sobbing loudly. "Oh, he was a dear boy; a brave, generous, noble boy; and when he was a child—Oh, my poor heart!—O merciful God!—Oh, provided I wasn't lost for ever, I would bear a thousand deaths to wipe out that."

"'Tis all wiped out—I know what you mean. I am a Catholic, as your sister was. Bob is a Catholic by this time; and he behaved so well that—now try to bear what I say with a thankful heart; I am going to give you a great joy. Are you prepared? Well, he got his pardon; and in a few months, believe me, you may expect to see him home."

"A Catholic, and free! Hold me, - what's the-"

Sophy put her arms round her, and laid her dead faint upon the floor. Quickly she ran out of the room, gave a shilling to the woman of the house to get some brandy, and told her to send for tea and a slice of ham. All was done; and Hannah was soon recovered. But yet she seemed so weakened in mind as well as body, that Sophy did not like to leave her: she puzzled over what she had better do. At last she determined to take her to her own home that very night. The necessary arrangements were made with the mistress of the lodgings, and Sophy carried off Hannah to the place whence the omnibus started by which she usually returned at night. And very happy she felt when she saw Bob's mother peacefully sleeping in her own little bed.

But as weeks passed on, Mrs. Noble was not quite happy about Hannah. Trouble had made an infirm old woman of her; yet she was not really more than fifty-four. But it was not her health, it was her mind that Mrs. Noble thought of. She was quite wandering sometimes, and could not always recollect that Bob was pardoned, or understand how it was that he was coming back. And

she would ask after her own nice furniture, and inquire after the good clothes she had once possessed, and wonder where that hundred pounds was which she had once lodged so proudly in the bank; and poor Tony, what was Tony doing? what had become of poor Tony? This last thought would bring her back to the real state of things; and she would recollect how Tony's name in the newspaper had brought Mrs. Noble to her poor lodging; and then she would weep bitterly, and say over and over again, for twenty times together, "Oh, there is no evil in this world but sin! it all came out of sin; oh, if I could get back again to the time when Bob told me of his first bad sin!"

Mrs. Noble was not sorry to hear this; and yet there was something heart-breaking in it. She always in her mind turned to her great resource,—the priest. And Mrs. Noble would repeat the thoughts of her heart in answer to Hannah, "Oh, that you would see a priest! oh, I wish you would let me send for the priest!" But Hannah never consented; and so Mrs. Noble could only look forward to Bob's return, and cast many a vain wish towards Mary Ashton, to whom Hannah had never written or sent in all her trouble, and so knew nothing about her.

At the end of his imprisonment, Tony appeared. He said that he was come to see Hannah; not to fling himself on Mrs. Noble. But Mrs. Noble said that she wanted a boy, if she could get a good one. "Good!" said Tony; "then I shall not do for you. Goodness and I have never been face to face yet; and I am afraid I can make but a very bad guess that she may be like. But if you will keep

me in food and clothes till Bob comes back, I'll work for you like a slave."

And Tony was taken on his own terms. He worked steadily; and, though just out of gaol for stealing, was certainly an honest servant to Mrs. Noble. And it gave poor Hannah great pleasure to see Tony about the house. It seemed to inspire her with new spirit; "ever loved my son," she would say, and shake her head, and sigh; her tears, and her wandering ways, were not so frequent as before.

Still, Mrs. Noble felt Hannah and Tony to be great charges upon her, both as to soul and body. She wished more and more every day for Bob's return; and it was now getting time to expect him. Sophy's heart beat one day when the postman put a letter into her hand. The direction was in a good tradesman-like hand. She opened it. It begun: "Kind and good friend." Is it from Bob? she says. She looks at the signature,—" your obliged and faithful friend, John Parker." Dear me, what can it mean? I was never a kind friend to any body that I can recollect. Nobody's making a fool of me, I hope. She turns again to the beginning, and reads these words:

" I write from the Star-fish public-house, Seacliffe. I came here to satisfy my wife—once Mary Ashton—as well as of my own good-will, to see after her aunt, Hannah May, about whom, notwithstanding many and constant inquiries, we have never heard any thing since her troubles. My wife has become a mother herself; and the sight of our own boy, now just three months old, woke up again our anxieties about Bob and his poor mother. So I gave in to Mary's wish, and came this long journey to the place where Hannah lived, in hopes of hearing more than we have been able to learn by letter. All I can hear is, that you were here on the same errand a little less than a year ago, and left your direction. I shall now go straight back to Mary. I keep a farm for a gentleman a few miles from Preston. I suppose you are the woman who was inquiring for Mary at Preston. We were in Ireland then, where my master had bought some land; and he sent me over to look at it. We were not settled at Lawnside then, and as I had some relations in Ireland, I took Mary with me; and she is the right sort of woman to show, I can assure you. Please to write soon, and tell us all you know."

Of course, Mrs. Noble wrote to Lawnside that very day. She counted the days required for an answer, and said that she should hear the next Sunday. But she did not; nor yet on Monday. But on Tuesday footsteps came: she thought of the postman; but no—not the postman, but a young woman, so neat and respectable, so modest and nice-looking, and with a baby in a blue cashmere cloak, and wrapped in a shawl, in her arms. A voice, not a London voice, but with a touch of the north-country tone in it, asked if Mrs. Noble was at home?

" My name is Noble," was the answer.

"Oh, my dear good friend, the Lord reward you!"

And Mary Parker and Sophy Noble kissed each other like old friends.

" Half my troubles are over now," said Mrs.

Noble. "But, oh! Mary Parker, that poor aunt

of yours-she ought to see a priest."

It required some care to let Hannah know of Mary's arrival; her nerves were so weak, she could scarcely bear any thing. But when the trial was over, it became an indescribable joy to her. Mary would sit by her side, with her beautiful boy on her knee, and talk about Bob. And Hannah sometimes would break off suddenly, and say,

"Oh, Mary, there is no evil in this world but sin. Take care of your child, Mary; you don't know what may happen when he gets out of your

arms."

"He will never leave the arms of holy Mother Church," says Mary. " A Catholic never need

commit mortal sin, and why should he?"

These things dwelt upon Hannah's mind; and as Mary finds that she will listen, she talks to her earnestly of the Catholic faith. And she knows that Hannah believes. One day, therefore, after an early visit to London, Mary says to her aunt, "You remember dear mother's death?"

Hannah trembles and says, "Yes, yes."

"You remember Father Francis, who gave her the last Sacrament?"

Hannah trembles and sheds tears, and says again, "Yes, yes."

"Well, he was always very kind to me. And I have been to see him this morning, for he is in London now; and he is coming to this house today. I almost think that he is come. I heard a footstep; and now you will see a priest?"

Hannah says nothing. But her heart has long been full of repentance; and she turns aside in the great chair, and covers her face, and weeps and sobs like a little child. Mary leaves her, to see if Father Francis is really come. A young, stout, fine, powerful man, very sunburnt, and in a sailor's dress, stands talking in whispers to Mrs. Noble. Mary has never seen him since the days of the little cottage at Woodcote, and she does not know him now! But she knows Father Francis; for he is there, and he and Bob have already made friends: they came down from London in the omnibus together. Father Francis sees Hannah first, and then she sees her son; it is the priest who conducts him to her! There could be no bad sin in that house now—but for Tony! And Tony wants to know why he is left out, if there is any goodness going; for it seems to him that he has been left out all his life. But his old friend Bob tells him that he shall be left out no longer.

Bob took a situation with a man who hired out carriages. The custom increased from the week he went there. He makes a good living. Mrs. Noble could not do her washing, if Hannah did not live with her. And Tony was taken by John Parker on the farm. Tony is a good Catholic; and the great object of his earthly delight is little Frank Parker. He says that he would rather be confined in a gaol, and dying of an ague-fit all the days of his life—these being the greatest bodily trials he ever suffered—than see that boy grow up to be well known to the police.

Always once a year a strong box, cramped with iron, and fit for a sea-voyage, is packed with many things. Altar-linen, surplices, and even a vest-

ment, have been there. But always plenty of books—Gardens of the Soul, hymn-books, tracts—are bought by family subscription, even by the dozen; and always quantities of rosaries. Mary Parker will pay for them herself; and is laughed at for being jealous upon that subject. However, she doesn't mind, but is positive; and even disputes with her husband about it, and says, "No, John, was are!" pay for them expenses for my little rose. with her husband about it, and says, "No, John, we will pay for them ourselves; for my little rosary, which was blessed by the Pope, did it all." And Mary has her own way. The box goes to Australia. The priest who received Bob, gives the things away among the convicts. Bob's friend, by whom he worked, always has the first choice; those who don't know the use of books and rosaries, and are allowed to receive presents, get seeds of vegetables and flowers. "Give to all who may receive," says Bob; "for if they had known the Catholic Church, they would never have been well known to the police."

Che End.

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JAMES CHAPMAN;

OR

The Way of Common Lense.

CHAPTER I.

WANTED A WIFE.

AMES CHAPMAN lived in a large town in England, which I must not name. The board over his door said that he was a dealer in marine stores. was also a mason, and in constant work at very Close to the shop-door was another good wages. door painted oak, and with a brass knocker on it. This door led to a parlour, a kitchen, and good back premises; and the passage which took you through the house was clean and well-aired, and pleasant with the smell of sweet-brier, balm of Gilead, and southernwood; for, town though it was, these homely plants grew in James Chapman's yard, in large boxes, and were taken great care of. But the shop was the chief sitting-room. The

goods were so placed that there was a space at the end where the fireplace was; and in this space, and just in front of the fire, there always stood a strong small oak-table, black with age, and also two high-backed chairs. There was generally a saucepan or a kettle over the fire, or a little dutchoven in front of it; and a black cat, very large, very sleek, with very pale-green eyes, generally purred very loudly by the side.

But the marine store-shop wanted somebody

besides pussy, and so somebody else was there. A very neat, nice-looking, middle-aged woman was there; and on the evening of which I am going to speak she had placed a tea-tray on the oak-table, and had got a frying-pan ready for the bacon and eggs which were laid upon a dish waiting for James Chapman to return from his work. This woman's name was Anny Millet. She was the widow of James's uncle-his mother's brother-and she had lived with him, as his housekeeper, ever since his mother's death; and his mother had been dead nearly ten years. The marine store-shop had first been James Chapman's father's, and then his mother's. When his mother died, he did not know what to do with it. He was in work as a mason. and did not want to make any change in his way of life. The difficulty was soon settled, however. Aunt Anny had been his mother's nurse during her illness. Her only child, Sarah, had just married, and gone to America. She therefore proposed to James to live with him as his housekeeper, and keep the shop. He consented, and was very glad to consent, for he was only twenty-two years of age. And so they had lived, very peaceably and comfortably, for ten years together. And now they were soon going to meet, after his day's work, and sit down to a comfortable tea.

Mrs. Millet did not wait long for her nephew. In a few minutes a fine-grown man, with large black eyes and curling black hair, a smiling mouth, and a fine fair forehead, walked in, and was cheerfully welcomed. James Chapman was a very sensible-looking man. He had a steady way of doing things, a thoughtful way of saying things, and altogether a manner which made people sure that he had plenty of brains, plenty of liveliness, plenty of spirit, and plenty of perseverance. He got some water, washed his face, neck, and hands, and came back with more curl in his hair, more colour in his cheeks, and, generally, a livelier air than before. He had had a hard day's work, and a long walk back; but he was not the worse for either. "Now, Aunt Anny, now for the eggs and rashers," he said, and settled himself into one of the high-backed chairs.

The eggs and the bacon were spitting and fizzing, the cat was performing a very loud purr, but Mrs. Millet never spoke. "Crying again, Aunt Anny?" was the next thing James said. "Bless the old woman, she'll break my heart. Burn the letter, and think no more about it." Then she answered, "But I must think about it, Jem."

"What for?"

"I ought to go."

"Ought to go—ought to go to America? An old woman like you! Don't you think you are out of your mind?"

"No, no, Jem," smiling-"no, no, I am overwise, perhaps. But, now that Sarah and her husband have even sent me my passage-money, and are able to give me a good home, and wish me to

come to them, I think I ought to go."

"As to passage-money, if you'll stay in this house, you won't want it. As to a home, while this shop stands, you've got it. And as to Sarah—of course daughters are dear, but so are nephews, I hope; she has a family, and her husband is like a stranger to you; you can't tell if he might take to you; and so, I think, you had better not go."

"His taking to me is my only fear," answered Mrs. Millet; "but there must be some risk."

"No risk with me," said James, very positively, and swallowing his bacon with a shake of his head;

"no risk with me: not the least."

"Not with you, I believe; but with your wife, James." James dropped the fork that was conveying the meat to his lips, and stared at his aunt with his mouth open. Mrs. Millet turned away her head and smiled.

"It might be worse to live with a nephew's wife than with a daughter's husband. And your wife would take care of the business, and then you would not want me. I should be out of place, and homeless."

"Wife!" said James with a great gasp. "Wife! Did you say wife, aunt?"

"Yes, I did."

"If that, then, isn't the queerest thing I ever heard," said James, and he drank a whole cup of tea without stopping. "Wife!-well then"-and

he wiped his mouth, and leaned back in his chair
—"well then, as you seem to think so much about
her, who is she to be?"

"She is any body you like to ask, James," said Aunt Anny, proudly. "Did you never fall in love

with any body?"

"No, never; upon my word, never," answered James. "Never fancied any one in that arm-chair except yourself. But do you mean to say that you intend to go?"

"Well, then, I do."

"Then marry I must!" exclaimed James. And he went on to finish his tea, eating a good deal faster than before. When he had done, he pushed away his plate, and said, "How soon, aunt?"

"What, James?"

"How soon shall you be off?"

"I ought to go next month. But I must stay longer if you've no one to come into the shop."

"Who is she? I wonder who I am to have,"

said James.

"You must have thought of it," said Aunt Anny.

"Yes, thought of it, in a way—that I have certainly. But in a contradictory way, not a marrying way. You have spoilt me, I am afraid. I know that home ought to be the best place in the world. I don't want to come home and find no water to wash, no fire to warm me, no supper to comfort me. I don't want to find the house dark, and dirty, and sloppy. I don't want to find company collected when I expect to be alone. I don't want to have the money spent in folly. And I don't want to have this business turned into a 'swag-shop.'"

James's feelings were quite worked up. His B 2

aunt saw that he felt all he said very strongly. She answered gently, "Now, James, don't expect an old head upon young shoulders. I am fifty-nine. Do you think that when I was twenty-nine I was just in ways and manners what I am now? Young people must have their companions; young people are naturally fond of show, and naturally fond of money too; and so, as to the shop, if you were to find your wife at first not quite so particular as"—

"I'd thrash her," roared James.

"You must bring her to what you like gently, now"—

"I'm not going to keep a school," murmured James.

"You are going to be married," said Mrs. Millet.
"You must make as good a choice as you can, and then be patient and loving, and get her into the

right way as well as you are able."

"It's enough to make one mad!" said James.
"Here I want a good-tempered, hard-working, clean, tidy, comfortable wife; good-looking, of course, and young enough to match me; respectable family, able to read and write, with honest principles, and an affectionate heart; in short, one to do justice to me and the business—and it is not so much to ask—and I can't tell where to find her, any more than if I was deaf and dumb and blind."

"What do you think of Sophy Smith?" said Mrs. Millet. It was rather a sudden question. But Mrs. Millet thought that Sophy Smith was a person not unlikely, as she said, "to suit James in the end."

"Too pious," said James, tossing his head.
"Better strict than flighty," said Mrs. Millet.

"I hate their prayer-meetings, and their chapelevenings, and their singings, and their sermons, and every thing belonging to them."

"You are not fair upon them," said his aunt.
"Yes I am. It's all fair. There's that boy Jobson. He used to work for me. Now he's a preacher. I can't see how carrying a hod should fit a man to be a minister. He says he had 'a call.' I say he hadn't. One man's opinion is as good as another's. He can't show any proof, or I can't see any thing, except the oil in his hair, the white tie round his neck, and the ring upon his finger. Why I should have been ashamed of such a call. He has changed his trade, that is all he has done. But he couldn't teach me mason's work, and I don't see why he should teach me religion. And yet Sophy Smith swears by him."

"You used to like Sophy Smith. I know you

did," urged Mrs. Millet.

"Sophy Smith might do for me, if she was not . of that pious sort."

"Then try the Established Church. They are

not too pious."

"And be dragged to 'dearly beloved brethren' once a week, because it is so highly respectable; and to 'confess and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness,' which is just a humbug. For if sin is worth being sorry for, it ought to be worth a truer sorrow than ever I saw there. No, no—no nonsense for me!"

"Sophy Smith would do very nicely," persevered

Aunt Anny.

"Well, I'll think of Sophy Smith," said James. "And I wonder what Sophy Smith thinks of me."



CHAPTER II.

A WIFE FOUND.

orny Smith was what is called a very nice girl. She was twenty-four years of age, pleasant-looking, and very amiable. She was the only daughter of Abel Smith, who was parish clerk

of the Protestant church—which had once been Catholic,—All Saints. She had been brought up in the Establishment, and yet she had left it. Her mother was dead. And her father, who looked very well on Sundays in his suit of shining black, and gave the Amens and read the alternate verses of the Psalms with great dignity, was for ever wondering why she would go of an evening to 'those preaching-houses,' which were quite beneath the notice of a child of his; he was quite sure of that.

But Sophy Smith had learnt, as a child, that she had a soul, and that that soul was immortal, and would live for ever in heaven for hell. She had learnt that the happiness of heaven was to last for ever, and that the torments of hell would last for ever. As a small child, she had wild to herself, "for ever,"—for ever,"—often, and

many times over. And she had thought with horror of the distress of a soul which found itself in eternal torment,—torment lasting for ever—for ever; never to know any end; but to be always for ever, for ever. So Sophy, as a small child, had determined to save her soul. And thus, from a very early age, she had set the one idea before

her mind, that she had a soul to be saved.

When she was a school-girl, she had read the New Testament, and a great part of the Old Testament, and had learnt a great deal of Bible history, and the Church Catechism. But the question, "What must I do to be saved?" had, some how, never been answered to her satisfaction. knew that it was something to be done. The Bible spoke of working out salvation, and compared life to people running for a prize. She, therefore, must not stand still; she certainly had a work to do. Which way, then, should she go? and how was she to accomplish her work? Not to commit the grosser sins seemed easy to her; but smaller sins she knew that she often committed. This she was sorry for; and the more she cared for her soul, and the more she thought of that great love which had brought our blessed Lord to die for her upon the cross, the more she wished to purify her desires, to serve God, and to give Him her whole heart.

But she did not know how to do this "How shall I do it? what can I do?" The poor girl's soul always seemed to be crying out in this way.

Now, one of the things she thought she might do, out of love to God, was to teach little children. So she took a class in the Church Sunday-school. She taught them just the same things that she had learnt herself. But she soon found that learning words and having ideas were two different things.

A child said to her, "Must every body be bap-

tised?"

"Oh, yes," said Sophy; "every body ought to

be baptised."

"But must every body?" persevered the child; "must every body be baptised in order to go to heaven?"

"I am sure people ought to be baptised," said Sophy, sadly puzzled, "but I suppose there's no

must in it."

"I don't believe in baptism, then," said the boy; "grandfather does not believe it; he said so last night, and I heard him, and I shall be like him; I shan't believe it either!"

Poor Sophy had nothing to say. She closed that conversation by asking the boy if he had learnt his spelling.

Another time a child says to her, "What is the meaning of dead souls, souls that have no life

in them?"

"The souls of the wicked are called dead, and

lifeless," answered Sophy.

"And the souls of the wicked go to hell?" said the child.

"Yes, they do," said Sophy.

"But the parson said in the sermon, this morning, that those people who did not stay to the Sacrament had no life in them; will they go to hell?"

. "My dear, people repent; and we can't know how any body may die."

"But if they don't repent, and if they do die without the Sacrament, where will they go?"

" My dear, we must hope that they will be

saved."

"But the parson took what he said from the Bible; does not the Bible, then, tell the truth?"

"Dear child," said Sophy, feeling grieved and puzzled, "these things are too high for a child to talk about."

"But mother talked about it after she got home this morning," said the boy; "and she said that father had died without receiving the Sacrament, and that he never could bring himself to take it; and she said that he had plenty of life in him, and that he was saved, she was sure of that."

Sophy promised the boy a penny if he would learn the hymn, "Oh, for a closer walk with God," and so stopped his questions for the present. But these things worried her mind. She had a first class, and a clever set to teach. She determined to say to Miss Temple, the parson's daughter, who had the chief management of the school, that she should like to give up the clever children, and take the ignorant ones. Her father, Abel Smith, taught the oldest boys, and some of these elder boys taught the very small and the very ignorant ones. Sophy, therefore, got a class of poor children who never went to any week-day school, and could not read, and began to teach them. She was obliged to teach them entirely by talking to them. It was very hard to make them understand any thing. And what was worse, she could not always understand herself. She found herself saying that certain things must be believed, because they were true, and from God; and then she found herself saying that she hoped that people were no worse off if they did not believe them. She told the "Scripture-stories." The children liked that very much. But when she got upon their duties, and what they were to avoid, and how they were to believe and obey, then she puzzled them and herself too. And they were sadly puzzled, poor children, and could not remember the long words of the catechism, or fix any meaning to them. When she had gone to Miss Temple for instruction in her troubles, Miss Temple had always said, "Sophy, be sure you exalt the clergyman in the eyes of the children; teach them to look up to him. It is impossible to work the parochial system unless all teachers do that."

Well, Sophy supposed it was impossible; but why, on religious grounds, she should exalt Mr. Temple, the parson, any more than Abel Smith, the clerk, she could not tell—one was a scholar, and the other was not—one was a gentleman, and the other a schoolmaster—one read the prayers, and the other said the Amens—one had, every year, five hundred pounds, and the other fifty—and, as far as she could see, both were a part of the English parochial system. To be a scholar and a gentleman, to be the principal person in all the reading on Sunday, and to be well paid for so doing, was very respectable, certainly. But there was no religious ground for exalting the parson in all this. Was she to make it an article of religious teaching to exalt the parson to the children, because he was educated at a good school and at college, or because he came of a high family, or

because Squire Morland had given him that living? "No," said her heart, "I can't found an article of religious teaching upon any of that." Why exalt the parson, then? "Oh, because he preaches," said Sophy to herself. "But," whispered her heart, "I preach too; my talking to those children is a sort of preaching"—but she stilled that thought. Sophy tried to exalt the clergyman, and told the shillers as much as she apple about and told the children as much as she could about him and his authority. After taking a great deal of trouble one Sunday, and getting herself more puzzled than usual over her work, she said to the children -- "And now, my dears, tell me who is your spiritual pastor?"

"The Devil," said a fine, bright-faced boy.

"Oh, no, Jem, that's dreadful. Think, my dear, now, and answer me this question,-Who is your ghostly enemy?"

"Mr. Abel Smith," said two or three together.
Sophy looked quite in despair. The children saw
her sad face, and one said, "Oh, perhaps that's
not your answer—that, perhaps, is Miss Temple's.
We give her different answers from the answers we give you."

"Do you? Tell me some."

"Oh, when you say, where do we learn our religion? we always say, from the Bible. But when she asks that, we always say, from the Church."

Sophy's heart was getting very cold. But she asked, "And where is the Church? what is the Church ?"

"Don't know -can't tell," said every child at once.

So Sophy shut her book, and never taught little

children in the Sunday-school any more.

After this Sophy went to "the Dissenters." Faith without works was the doctrine she heard from them. She thought of it for a time. But Sophy had a very honest heart; she was really in earnest to save her soul; she really believed that man required a Saviour, and she also believed that by the sacrifice of the cross, when God the Son died for the world, salvation was offered to every one; and she could not help seeing that something more than what "the Dissenters" meant by faith was necessary to man. In fact, Sophy's soul wanted the Sacraments. If she had been early taught the true religion, she would have been a straight-walking, single-minded, devout-hearted Catholic. But, as it was, she seemed to be wasting her life in wonders and wishes, and getting no strength to her soul, or comfort to her heart.

She had a hatred of sin. She knew that sin had crucified the Lord; and she was sure that all sin must be doing Jesus dishonour, and so she hated it. But it seemed as if no other person thought as she did. She had even heard it said, that a life of sin was found, after conversion, to be a good preparation for the ministry,—as if any good could ever come out of sin—as if sin ought not always to be regarded as the greatest misfor-

tune that can happen to any person.

Poor Sophy remained very dissatisfied. She went generally to some dissenting meeting-house, but sometimes to one and sometimes to another; and she did not "swear by Jobson," though James Chapman had saucily said that she did. She went

to these places for the preaching. But whether the preacher was right or wrong, that she could never decide. Certainly they disagreed among themselves as much as they disagreed with the Established Church which she had left. Sometimes, after an exciting sermon, she would wish that she could believe with Mr. Thomas; then she thought that Mr. James was deeper and more reasoning; afterwards, Mr. Johns took her fancy, because he had such new and clear views of prophecy. And then, because of these preachers one said that there was no eternal punishment, but only a kind of purgatory for every body; and another, that there was no sort of purgatory whatever, but only a place of eternal torment for all kinds of sinners; and the third, that there was neither hell nor purgatory, but an eternal sleep, like death, for sinners, - because of these disagreements, she left all for Mr. Williams, as he taught nothing for certain, which she thought very safe.

But in spite of all this, at the bottom of her heart Sophy felt that it was impossible to believe that all this ignorance came from God,—that God had left every thing unsettled she could not believe; if it was good for man to know any thing about the future state to which his life was leading him, it was very odd that God had not provided for his being taught about it.

And these plain questions would force themselves so obstinately upon Sophy's mind sometimes, that she could not help shedding tears. And sometimes, even in the middle of her work, when nobody was near, she would drop down upon her knees, and say to our heavenly Father: "O Lord, I want to be saved. My desire is to get to heaven. Remember me, and have mercy upon me!"

And thus, in the midst of many contradictions and trials, Sophy Smith served God as well as she was able. And perhaps if James Chapman had known all that my readers know of this girl's state of mind, he would not have tossed his head and called her "too pious."

Are they going to be married? That was the question. Again and again Aunt Anny said it, wondering and wishing in her heart. She had a belief that James had, as she said, "fancied Sophy," but that something had held him back. And she was now sure that this something was a little jealousy of Jobson. But she did not believe that Sophy cared about Jobson, or had ever cared about him: there was no reason, then, she was sure, for James holding back.

A neighbour came in to ask about buying widemouthed bottles just as Mrs. Millet was thinking this; so she said: "Mrs. Tatler, did you ever hear that Sophy Smith was going to be married to

young Jobson?"

"What, Jobson the preacher,—he who used to work with your nephew? Oh, dear no! But I have heard he would like to marry Nell Cary; only he can't, you know."

"Can't! why not?"

"She's a Roman Catholic," said Mrs. Tatler;
"and they don't like marrying out of themselves,
I fancy. Anyhow, she could hardly marry a



preacher, nor could a preacher marry her, I suppose."

"The Carys are not very strict, I believe," said Mrs. Millet, who was something of a gossip.

"Oh, strict—strict, indeed! No, I should think not," answered Mrs. Tatler, who liked nothing upon earth half so well as observing upon her neighbours. "Those Roman Catholics are very bigoted, bigoted in their own belief; but many of them are not particularly strict in their actions, I can assure you."

"I don't know any thing about them," said Mrs. Millet, "though Ambrose Cary has made and mended shoes for me for the last ten years.

Nell's a pretty girl-and she likes Jobson."

"Jobson likes her, that is nearer the truth, I believe. But Jobson's thriving. His mother and he have moved into a sweet little house in Morland Lane; quite rural 'tis, with garden and green railing; and Jobson is a Scripture-reader, and has a mission, or is in a mission, or is taken up by some mission; I don't understand what those things are; but, anyhow, he has so-much a week, and is very comfortable, I should think, for his mother was looking out for a servant."

"Then it would be a good match for Nell Cary," observed Mrs. Millet, who all this time had been handing down dusty bottles from the top-shelf of a cupboard, from which Mrs. Tatler had been choosing which she liked best; "a good match for Nell, who has been helping to

make shoes all her life."

"It will never be," said Mrs. Tatler, taking out her purse and putting a shilling on the counter; c 2

"those Roman Catholics never think that any body knows any thing of religion except themselves, and so Nell must be converted first: and some people say that that is Jobson's only aim; but he might as well try to talk the church-tower over to the Refuge's roof. But I never heard that there was any thing between him and Sophy Smith; no, never." And so Mrs. Tatler wished Mrs.

Millet good-bye, and went away.

This conversation comforted Mrs. Millet a good deal. When James came home that night, she

deal. When James came home that night, she told him all about it. She was a good deal vexed to find that he would talk of Nell Čary. It really was rather provoking, when she wished him to talk of Sophy Smith. She scarcely answered him, and hardly appeared to listen; but James Chapman talked on, and talked with great vigour and life, and said, that that little Nell Cary was not a bad kind of girl at all; that she was very merry, and very clever, and could work hard too; and that she was, without any doubt, the most beautiful girl within fifty miles round. Poor Mrs. Millet! she heard, and pressed her lips together, and pouted, and even frowned with vexation. But when Chapman began to say how bright and starlike were Nell's eyes, how fair her skin, and that such rich golden natural curls had never been seen on any head before, then Mrs. Millet's pa-tience was quite gone, and she cried out, "Jem, Jem; my goodness! you'd provoke a saint; you are not fallen in love with Nell yourself, are you?"

"No, not a bit," said James, very quietly.

"But what's the matter, old woman? What's the vexation about? Haven't I known Nell all my life?"

"All her life, very likely. She is but a child, with an old father who is always cursing or swearing, and an old nurse for her mother."

"Let alone the father and mother," said James, with something rather more positive in his manner than was usual with him. "We were speaking of Nell. I like Nell. I have known her ever since she was a baby; she is but just turned eighteen, and she is very beautiful—there's no doubt of that. Her mother is scarcely ever at home: out at work all day, and out nursing night as well as day. She is an only child, and she has a dull life of it. And being very funny, and clever, and full of spirits, she asks sharp questions, and gives quick answers, and gets the name among gossips of being flighty and giddy; when I do believe that her heart is as free from evil intention as any girl's need be. That's my firm opinion."

And James Chapman quite surprised his aunt by the strong arguing way in which he spoke. She was a kind-hearted woman, so she agreed

with him directly.

"But, James, how came you to know so much about her?"

"I don't know so very much," he answered, "though I have never passed her without speaking since she was a toddling child, and I was a big boy. But the other night, as I was coming home after the day-and-quarter work I was engaged with at Morland House, I saw Nell, by herself, staring into a shop-window where silks and satins, and plenty of gay-patterned things, were set out; and I stood still by her side without her observing me, so fixed was her attention on the

fine clothes. 'Only one shilling a yard,' said Nell to herself softly, 'how lovely!' 'And four-pence three farthings,' said I out loud; 'how dear! Well. Nell laughed in her pretty way, 'Believe me, James,' said she, 'the one shilling was written so large that it confused my eye-sight, so that I couldn't see the pence.' 'Ah,' said I, 'the shilling out loud and the pence in a whisper, that's the way you girls are persuaded.' It ended in my walking home with her. We never had so much serious talk in our lives before. She told me how dull her home was; and how hard she often worked at shoe-binding for her father; and yet how, sometimes, she had nothing to do. She told me, too, that he paid her, and paid her well, considering that she had board, washing, and lodging over; yet she said that if she could get a guinea a-day she would not willingly get it by shoe-binding; that it did not suit her inclination, and that it made her so wretched, that the mere smell of the leather sometimes made her sick. when I advised her to seek some other way of gaining her bread, she said that she ought to stay at home with her father, that she ought to be there when her mother was scarcely ever at home; that an only child ought to have more patience, and that, no doubt, the situation of life in which God had placed her was that very one in which, if she was faithful to His grace, she could best sanctify her soul. This, now, to my judgment, expressed a very high state of feeling."

"However, you are not thinking of Nell Cary for a wife," said Mrs. Millet, smiling.

"No," answered Chapman; "but I feel very

sorry to think of her being followed, and flattered,

and fooled by Jobson."

"Oh, let Jobson alone, won't you?" said Mrs. Millet; "or at least be satisfied that Sophy Smith is not thinking of him."

James laughed. "And is it to be Sophy Smith?"

he said.

"Who better?" said Aunt Anny. "She has been well brought up, is of a very decent family, has had rather a superior education, and is nothing at all of a flirt, or a company-keeper, or a go-about in any way."

"That is a shop-keeping view," said James.
"She is a very good article, and would, no doubt, be cheap at a high price. But I can't choose a wife as you would choose a lot of marine stores."

"I hope you may never do worse; for I never made a bad bargain in my life," answered Aunt

Anny merrily.

James Chapman walked up and down the shop, and kept on saying to himself, "Is it to be Sophy Smith?"

"Now, my dear Jem," exclaimed Aunt Anny, on his making a pause—"my dear Jem, just give me authority to pay her a visit, I'll find every

thing out so nicely for you."

James had fixed his eyes on his aunt, and he was laughing silently. "Now, that would be dreadful," he said. "Fancy Sophy and you talking me over, and turning my character inside out, and considering whether or not I should be much the worse for wear, just as if I was a three-ply worsted stocking, or any such small article that could be well recommended; and all this over a

cup of tea and a muffin perhaps. No, no. I see I must do it myself. You have driven me desperate, aunt. There, hand me my hat!"

"Oh, James—will you? Really now! Well, believe me, I don't know whether to laugh or

cry."

"You can't know, either—not till I come back," said James, kissing her fondly, which settled the

question, and made her cry.

And so she watched James go, and then said that she could scarcely believe her eyes. However, she had occupation for her thoughts in less than ten minutes. A boy from a cabinet-maker's shop, not far off, came to the door, bearing on his shoulders a comfortable-looking chair, a little smarter and more neatly made than the two chairs already mentioned as belonging to the shop; and he set it down, saying that Mister Chapman had bought it as he passed by, and sent a message with it that he should, he fancied, bring home a friend to supper. She took in the chair with a smile-"This is one of Jem's jokes, now," she said. "I've a great mind to buy some oysters, and order in some porter." She put the things about her a little in order—she waited, walked about, talked to herself-wondered if it was all a joke, and if James was only gone into the White Rose for a glass of Burton ale, and to make fun of her. While she was wondering and thinking, with hope and fear hatching together in her mind, she heard steps and voices; she looked up, and there was Jem with Sophy Smith on his arm, looking very blushing and pretty; and Aunt Anny, not knowing if any thing had passed, did not know what to say, and, as she afterwards confessed, never felt so much like an idiot before in her life.

"Why don't you speak?" asked Jem. "You

have talked of Sophy, can't you talk to her?"
"I don't know what to say," answered Mrs.
Millet, yet smiling, and setting the new chair for

Sophy to sit in.

" Very good," said Jem. " Sophy, that's your seat. You have promised to be a blessing to my fireside. You can't begin better than by doing as Aunt Anny tells you, so sit down at once."

But Sophy could not sit down, for she and Aunt Anny were in a moment locked in a close

embrace. And they are going to be married!





CHAPTER III.

WEDDING-DAY HOSPITALITY.

ow, then," said Mrs. Millet, "let us have a quiet cup of tea." So the party sat down, and the three arm-

James Chapman looked at Sophy with pride and pleasure. Sophy looked very happy. The fact was that they had long respected and liked each other. Now and then,-if the whole truth must be told,-Sophy had wondered to herself "if James Chapman meant any thing;" and often, very often, James had said to himself that Sophy would have made a capital wife if it had not been for Johson. But James was not as wise as usual about Jobson. He was jealous about nothing. Jobson had never had any influence over Sophy. Nobody had any influence over her. She could not say from the bottom of her heart that she believed any body to be certainly right; and how could a well-educated, sensible girl give up her mind to be influenced by persons who were no-thing more than she was herself? She had often gone to hear Jobson preach. He had a rapid easy way of preaching, which pleased her fancy for

half-an-hour or even an hour; but as to thinking Jobson to be right, above Mr. Thomas, or Mr. James, or Mr. Johns, or Mr. Williams—oh, no, that she never thought for one moment. Perhaps they were each right on some points, perhaps they were all wrong on some others. Indeed, she had her own particular views on some things; some texts of Scripture she could not help taking in her own way, and so, in some things, she differed from all. And she could never forget the children at the Church-school who gave different answers to the same question, according to the person who asked it. Aunt Anny talked of the shop and the business, and after tea she showed the house from roof to cellar, and they stood in the back-yard and admired the balm of Gilead, the sweet-brier, and the southernwood; and James said he should add lemon-plant and oak-leaved geranium before Sophy took them in charge.

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Millet, laughing—

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Millet, laughing—
"there, Sophy; that just tells you what an odd kind of a man James is. No wonder that I was anxious about a proper wife for him. Any other man would have thought of something with bright flowers; but he does not care for any thing but

the things that smell sweet."

"It's a fancy of mine, I know," answered James. "We have no garden. We can't have all kinds; so I have those that are wonderful in their sweetness, and don't lose their smell even when dried. Still, I would like them to have fine flowers too; but that is against nature, it seems."

"That would be like perfection," said a voice close by; it was Nell Cary's, and she held in her hand a pair of mended boots belonging to Mrs. Millet—"that would be like perfection, James," she said, with her beautiful face raised towards him; "and I once read in a good book that God has reserved perfection to Himself. 'Thou only art perfect,' is what we ought to say every time that we wish that a fine flower had a sweet smell, or that a shrub with a sweet smell had a brilliant blossom."

"And a very beautiful thought that is," said Sophy. Mrs. Millet took Nell aside, to examine the boots, and pay for them. While they were away, James Chapman spoke to Sophy, and he spoke like an Englishman who had an honest heart. "Sophy, if you have not known that girl, know her from this time. She is very lovely, and not over-much looked after; and she hears foolish nonsense enough to turn the heads of ten such young girls as she is. And now that I have heard, this afternoon, that Jobson is after her, making love to her, and pretending to seek after her soul, I can't but feel it. And really, 'tis a wonderful girl. Speak kindly to her, Sophy." Nell Cary at that moment joined them again. Mrs. Millet was with her. "Have you told her?" asked James of his aunt in a whisper-" told her of Sophy and me?" "No, no; of course not." James picked a piece of balm of Gilead, and gave it to Nell. "There, Nell, take that; and take it from Sophy and me. For Sophy and I are going to be married; and we would like your good wishes, and offer our friendship to you. And now," said James, very steadily, as he looked on the deeply earnest expression of Nell's face, "if you have no woman's heart to tell your younggirl's troubles to, come here and tell them to Sophy. Sympathy is often sweet. You may want it one day."

Nell turned her eyes slowly on Sophy; Sophy smiled, and held out her hand, which Nell took,

and held firmly for a moment.

"I am a poor Catholic girl," she said, "and I have not as good a home as some girls have. James knows something about it. If I ever could make a friend, or ask for sympathy out of my own religion, I would come to you; but none but a Catholic can advise a Catholic, I am sure of that."

"Why not, little bigot?" said James, laughing. Nelly laughed in return directly, and very heartily too. "Because you are ignorant, James, and can't tell which way to walk yourselves, and therefore would be very bad ones to guide me. Now, I know my way very well. But I should like to be friends with Sophy; I should like to know her, and love her, and gossip with her now and then—only a very little you know; will you consent to that?"

Sophy laughed, and held out her hand to the bright-faced girl, and James said, "Take your wilful way, Nelly," and laughed too; so Nelly ran away, and they were again alone. "She has deep and beautiful thoughts," said Sophy; "and she feels so sure of being in the right way!" "Oh, that all Catholics are sure of," said Mrs. Millet. "In that their world beats ours," said James, "for we are just like cat and dog. If one shouts 'Yes,' there may certainly be found another to shout 'No.' If one says 'Always,' another says

'Never.' If one says that the Bible declares a thing to be one way, another says that it declares it to be just the contrary. My religion, or such as I was taught when a child, has been knocked

to powder long ago."

Mrs. Millet was sadly vexed that Sophy should hear James speak so openly. She thought that she saw an odd look on Sophy's face; and so she did. But Mrs. Millet, who knew nothing of Sophy's thoughts, was vexed with her nephew, and said to him:

"Why do you talk like that—so random, James? You are as religious as any body else; you know

you are."

"I know that I am ignorant of all religion," said James. "At present, Sophy"—and James turned towards her—"at present my religion is this: I will have this kept as an honest and a decent shop. I'll have no receiving of stolen goods here. I'll have nothing to do with encouraging servants to rob their masters and mistresses. So my religion is to be an honest man; and also, to be a man of common sense. Now, common sense sets me against Jobson; and as to others, common sense shows me that if Protestants can't agree among themselves as to what is truth, they can't teach me. When they say to me, 'Are you a good Protestant?' I answer that I'm nothing at all."

"Common sense!" repeated Sophy. "James," she went on, "I have the greatest respect for common sense. Common sense sets you against Jobson;

now, I should like to know why?"

"What right has he to teach ?" asked James indignantly.

"Now, James," said Sophy, with great animation, "that is the very question that I want to have answered. I have not deceived you. I have told you that I have always been of a very serious turn. And that question has troubled me for years—"

"Troubled about Jobson for years!" exclaimed James, standing up and quite staring with fright.

"Oh, James, you make me laugh. Jobson! No, Come, sit down. Jobson need not trouble you. The question of what right has any man to teach—what is it that gives a man a right to teach—that has troubled me for years."

"The right to teach," said James-"the right

to teach. Well, I never thought of it before. But it is a very puzzling question. I can't make it out. Sophy, my dear, we will talk it over after we are married."

"If any person have a right to teach, then we have a duty to hear and learn from them." said Sophy.

"Of course," said James. "But Sophy, where

shall we be married?"

Sophy smiled and answered, "Wherever the minister who has a right to teach can be found."

"I shall be blind, deaf, palsied, bald, grey-haired, and a cripple, before the question of who is authorised to teach, or if any body is authorised to teach, can be settled in this country," said James.

"It is the question that has troubled me for

years," said Sophy, over again.

"But my question might be settled at the Registrar's office," said James, with smiling perseverance.

"Well, let it be so," said Sophy. "In our state

of mind I think it would be consistent to have it so."

"And not go to any place of worship!" exclaimed Mrs. Millet with horror. "Oh, James, go to church or chapel; go to some place of worship or other; get blessed by a minister of some kind; now do, do, Jem, I beg you to do so."

"What is a place of worship?" said James.
"What right has any man to set up a place of worship? What right has any man to say he is a minister? What right has any man to think he

can bless me?"

"What dreadful questions!" ejaculated Aunt Anny, casting up her eyes.

"What puzzling questions!" softly sighed Sophy,

looking down rather sadly.

"Very common-sense questions," cried out James; "I never thought much about them before. But now that my thoughtful Sophy has put them into my head, I'll work them out, if man can."

A bright, earnest, thankful smile was given by Sophy to her promised husband for those words.

"Yes," she said, "a man of common sense ought to work them out. We will try to work out the right answers to those common-sense questions together."

In spite of Aunt Anny's distress, and even of the anger of Sophy's father, the marriage was made at the Registrar's office. It took some persuasion to get Abel Smith to come to dinner. He resisted his daughter's entreaties, and yielded at last to James.

"There is no sense in your staying away," said James. "Sophy and I have good hopes of happiness and prosperity. We are married. That's a fact. Isn't that a fact?"

"Yes, yes; you are married; I know that," growled Abel.

"Then you need not wish for more. Come to dinner," said James.

"I wished you to be married by Mr. Temple. I have a great devotion to the Established Church,"

said Mr. Smith.

"And my aunt has a great devotion to the Independent Meeting-house; and Sophy has had half-a-dozen devotions; and I never had any at all. You don't mean to say that you alone are right, I suppose? What right can you have to say that?"

"I don't wish to control any one's conscience," said Abel; "I judge no man."

"Then come to dinner," urged James. And Abel came.

But Abel Smith was not in a very good temper; and James Chapman was in such happy spirits that many little troubles occurred between them, and thus gave Sophy uneasiness; and she wished the dinner well over. But after dinner came the greatest trial of all. Aunt Anny said to Mr. Smith that she thought they ought to drink the bride and bridegroom's health. Mr. Smith thought her perfectly right; so he made a very pretty speech, and the health was drunk. This having been successful, Mr. Smith was encouraged to do more. He proposed, as the clerk of All Saints', to give "Mr. Temple and the Church!" and he hoped, looking very hard at James, and then at Sophy, that such a toast would not be disagreeable to any body there. James smiled in a way which made Sophydread mischief. She looked imploringly at him. But James rose to give a health in return, and also—we are obliged to say it—he gave "Jobson and his mother's back-parlour," and sincerely hoped that Mr. Smith would have no objection to drink that.

Mr. Smith jumped up in a rage. He said that he had been insulted; that the town, the whole country, even the crown and the glorious constitution, had been insulted. And he shook his forefinger at James and said, "If you allow me to go out of this house without an apology, I will never come into it again."

Sophy was ready to cry. She looked with dismay

on her husband's smiling face.

"Mr. Smith," said James, "I have no more insulted you than you have insulted me. Drink my - toast."

"I won't, sir," cried the angry Abel.
"Oh, don't, James," cried Sophy. "Give my father another toast. Change it, James; do, for

my sake."

"You shall not be denied your first wife's request," said James, still smiling in every feature of his face. "I will change my toast. Drink 'Private judgment,' Mr. Smith.

"With great pleasure, James," said Abel, with an air of rather grand condescension. "Private judgment! - it is the right of every English-

man."

They all drank the toast. And when James set down his glass, he said, "And what is Private judgment' but 'Jobson and his mother's back-parlour,' if he likes it? Ah, Mr. Smith, you are frightened at words. You have drunk the obnoxious toast after all !"

Mr. Smith looked foolish; Sophy said something pleasant; and nothing disagreeable followed; which, as Aunt Anny said, was a mercy!





CHAPTER IV.

A SERMON AT HOME.

HEN the first Sunday came, James very gravely asked his wife where she wished to go. Sophy did not prefer any one place above another;

she would go wherever James pleased. James walked up and down the room and did not answer. At last he walked into the passage, and called up stairs, "Aunt, will you go to chapel this morning? You were going to stay at home to get dinner; but Sophy and I are going to stay at home."

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Millet. "I will go, if you

are staying at home."

So Mrs. Millet went to the Independent Chapel, and James and Sophy were left alone. James went into the yard and looked at his plants, and measured a place in the corner where he had often planned to build a greenhouse, and made a calculation in his pocket-book of what the expense would be. Sophy made the house tidy, and prepared the dinner.

When James came in, he found Sophy sitting at the little stout oak-table before the fire with the Bible open. She was reading, in rather a loud whisper to herself, very earnestly: "If the blind lead the blind," read Sophy, "shall not they both fall into the ditch?"

James heard the words. "Who said those words?" he asked.

"Our Lord Himself," answered Sophy.

"It suits exactly with what my mind came to when I settled to sit at home this morning. We are now settled down to, I hope, a peaceful, happy, steady married life. I should like to serve God; I should like to listen to His teachers, and to walk His way. The only question about religion in my mind is this: Which is God's way? To put it very plainly, Sophy, I can't believe that because all these preachers and teachers are of many opinions, and are each one ready to fight for their own opinion, therefore the Lord of all, the Giver of salvation, the Saviour Himself, has no fixed mind of His own. No mortal man's way can ever have any power with me unless I believe that it is also Almighty God's way. If I could once find His way, then I would follow in it: to be sure that you are walking in God's way must be freedom and happiness, and honour and glory too; I am confident of that."

"The very thoughts of my heart," exclaimed Sophy, full of thankfulness. "To find out the way which our Blessed Lord, if He were on earth again, would tell us to take and keep faithful to. I declare that, in all my changes, I never wished for

any thing else."

"Well, then," said James, "we are of one mind."

"That's a blessing," said Sophy; and she felt what she said quite sincerely.

"In the mean time," said James, "till we know more of what we ought to do, I don't intend to go to hear any preacher."

"Whatever you please," replied his wife. "I can only say as I said just now; I should like to find that way in which our Lord would place us, if He were again upon earth to do it."

"He were again upon earth to do it."

"He was upon earth once, and He left teachers and preachers," said James thoughtfully.

"Yes," answered Sophy; "but, so much have I gone through, I sometimes wonder if there is any right way. exactly right way, I mean—left upon earth; or, if there is, whether it is possible certainly to find it?"

tainly to find it."

"It is an idea which is quite contrary to common sense," said James. "If Jesus was once on earth for our salvation, suffering for us, and dying for us, and rising again, and ascending into heaven; and if He left behind Him preachers and teachers, and if He left behind Him preachers and teachers, and if He is to come again and judge all men at the last day,—if all that is true, surely it is common sense to believe that His teaching is preserved upon earth, and that it will be preserved till the end of the world. Do you think that the great work of salvation was left by the Almighty Father to come down to His children—to you, Sophy, and to me—merely by the memory and talking of men and women like ourselves, liable to forget, and certain to make things of more or less importance, according to their fancies or dispositions—and, as we see, always quarrelling as to who is right and who is wrong? I'll never believe that our Father in heaven let the true teaching disappear from the earth, and gave over the cause of God the Son to such babbles and confusion as we hear every day. It is not only contrary to common sense to think so, but it is contrary to all our notions of common decency; it is an insult to God, to suppose that He supplied no means to teach those creatures whom He had redeemed, and whom He is coming again to judge—to reward or to condemn."

coming again to judge—to reward or to condemn."
"Very true," said Sophy, with a sigh: "but,"
glancing at the book still open before her, "we

have the Bible."

"In which our Lord Himself warns us against blind teachers. That's a good text for us. We, Sophy, are in search of teachers who are not blind. Where are those teachers who honour the Bible, and are all of one mind about its meaning, and always have been of one mind, and always will be? Where are the teachers who are not preaching the doctrine and opinions of any mere man, but who are come down from those first teachers who learnt from God the Son Himself? Those are the teachers whom I should like to teach me. I should take their interpretation of the Bible as the true meaning of it, with which I, as a Christian, would have no right to find fault."

"Do you know, James, that you are talking

just as the Papists talk ?" said Sophy.

"No, I don't," answered James. "I know nothing of the Papists; concerning their religion I know nothing. Some of them are very good workmen,—I know that."

"They think that their religion, with the Pope for its head upon earth, has come down from our Lord's Apostles. And they think that their priests, when they are made priests, receive power from God by which they can do things which no other men can do—change the bread and wine, and for-give sins, for instance ——"

"Those are strong things to believe," interrupted James; "but not too strong, Sophy," he went on, "if the Papists really believe that their religion is the religion left by Jesus Christ in the hands of the Apostles, to be preached and taught to the world,

"Nothing is too strong to be believed which comes with such authority—that is, if you accept the authority," said Sophy. "And so, James," she added, with a smile, "no Papist could have drank your toast of Private judgment. But I don't suppose that you are going to turn Roman Catholic."

"According to what you say, they give a very good history of themselves. They have nothing of the Jobson kind of thing about them ----"

"Never mind Jobson," said Sophy.

"Well, I don't mind him for his own sake; only he comes in as an example. The preachers about us, whose authority to teach rests a good deal upon their own good opinion of themselves, are all Jobsons in my opinion. Not all Jobsons of yesterday perhaps; but all men whose beginnings may be found in nothing better than human opinions. I might begin and be a Jobson directly; and in a few years we might have large congregations of Chapmanites. But what authority could I show for interpreting the Bible, or what authority would any of my followers have? I say it again—the Papists tell the best story of themselves."

But if, James, you were to become a preacher,

and the founder of a new sect or a new chapel, you would do it because you would believe yourself chosen by God for that very work. You would feel 'a call,' and that would be your authority."

"Is that the doctrine?" said James.

"Yes," answered Sophy.

James walked up and down the room for a minute or two in deep thought; then he stood still by his wife's side, and said, "But I should have no proof to give of having received this call."

"Only your own sincere opinion in the beginning. The truth of the call would be proved by

your success in your ministry," said Sophy.

"Oh! then my own opinion, and the opinion of people who liked me, and perhaps wanted me, and the opinion of a congregation who fancied me,—these opinions would be proofs of the reality of my 'call.'"

"Yes, they would," said Sophy.

"Well, my dear wife," answered James, "I see no sense in such 'calls.' We know that our Lord called the Apostles, and that they received the Holy Ghost to fit them for the ministry. If in their day such a man as myself had talked as we have now talked about a 'call,' he would, I am sure, have been put down with horror."

"I am sure of it; I have often thought so," said

Sophy.

"Then you, perhaps, can tell me what provision the Apostles made for true teaching after they should die?"

"The Holy Ghost which they had received, and which had set them apart from other men, and had given them powers above other men, was conveyed by them to others." (The Bible was still open before Sophy.) "Here," she said, "you can read it." She showed the sixth verse of the first chapter of the second epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy. "Of course St. Paul was a true teacher," said Sophy.

"Well, then," said Sophy, "here we see the first step down towards us. Here St. Paul says to Timothy,—'Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.' You see St. Paul had ordained Timothy, and an invisible grace had fallen on Timothy, making him one of God's own teachers."

"I see," said James thoughtfully. He was looking over his wife's shoulder, and very much interested. "I see—Timothy was to ordain teachers, as St. Paul had ordained him. And St. Paul prophesied to him that a time should come when people, after their own strong will, should heap to themselves teachers, and not endure sound doctrine. St. Paul, like our Blessed Lord, knew where the people would go if they took blind teachers. And you feel sure that the power of ordaining teachers, of continuing the gift of God, so that the true doctrine should be kept,—remained after the Apostle's own time?"

"I feel quite sure of it," said Sophy. "Timothy had it, Titus had it,—see here: in the fifth verse of the first chapter of the Epistle to Titus St. Paul tells Titus to ordain elders in every city,—so he must have had the power. And I must say for the Roman Catholics," said Sophy, shutting the Bible, "that if we allow the claim that their Bishops are in regular succession from the Apostles, they have a right to expect to be heard."

"And I intend to hear them," said James. Sophy looked up with a face of surprise.

"If," said James, "Almighty God provided that there should be true teaching for three generations, as I have just seen in your Bible, then why not for more? Why not till the end of the world? It is common sense to expect that He did provide for it. And I believe that the true teaching is somewhere; and I shall watch these Catholics, and come to some opinion about them soon."

"And do let us pray for God's grace to help us," said Sophy. "Nothing ever can be done well with-

out that."

"I pray God to help a poor man, an honest man, who wants to save his soul, into the right way." James Chapman said this with great fervour; and so this long and important conversation ended.





CHAPTER V.

AN INTERPRETER.



and talked about the sermon, which was "very striking;" and the preacher, who was "very sweet." "Oh, James,"

she said, "I wish you had been there."

"Was this preacher an authorised person?" answered James; "that's the question. When I can find the right sort, I will accept their teaching, as the exposition of the true doctrine delivered by our Lord to the Apostles, and by them to others whom they ordained, and who, by that ordination, received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and were enabled to ordain others, and to teach in all the cities, as Titus did by command of St. Paul."

Now James Chapman said this, not exactly as an answer to his aunt, but because it was his pleasure to arrange his new ideas, and utter them in one sentence. But Mrs. Millet, unconscious of all that had passed between James and Sophy, opened her eyes, and even her mouth, so wide in astonishment, that James, seriously as he felt, could not help laughing at the surprise he had occasioned.

"My dear old aunt," he exclaimed, taking her by the arm and good-temperedly pushing her into a chair, "Sophy and I have been preaching to each other; I wish you had heard us."

"Now, nonsense, James."

"Oh, I hate nonsense."

"But what right have you and Sophy to be preaching?"

"Exactly the same right as the man you have

been to hear."

"Upon my word, Sophy," said Mrs. Millet, leaving her chair with a smile, "I shall have to beg pardon for having praised this man. I am afraid you will find him an odd bargain."

"I shan't quarrel with him," said Sophy. "I

fancy he will do for me."

Mrs. Millet was more puzzled than ever. Sophy not vexed—Sophy, who was so serious. Well, she couldn't understand these newly-married people at all. Perhaps they had better be left a little longer to talk things out by themselves. So she said she should drink tea with Mrs. Tatler, if James did not want her to keep the house. James and Sophy said that they should have a quiet walk in the afternoon, and stay at home all the evening. This set Mrs. Millet at liberty; and when five o'clock came, she walked off to her friend.

Mrs. Millet had not been gone more than ten minutes, when a bonnet passed the window which James knew very well. He jumped up with the speed of lightning, bounded over the stool, swung himself past the table, and was at the house-door in a second. A laugh, not loud, but very sweet,

was his welcome; and Sophy heard him say, "Come in, come in, Nell! you never were so much wanted in your life." Sophy ran forward when she heard Nell's name; and she too begged Nell Cary to come in. So Nell did as she was so pressingly asked to do, and was soon placed in Mrs. Millet's chair.

"Now, tea and cake, cream and sugar, another

cup for Nell; there, that's right,"

Sophy smiled quietly, as she fulfilled her husband's directions almost as quickly as he spoke; and Nell, looking very beautiful, gave another low musical laugh, and felt very happy to be so pleasantly welcome.

"Now, Nell, I am going to put you through your Catechism," was James's next speech. Nell laughed again, but much more heartily: she laughed till she almost cried. What could James

Chapman mean?

"Stop laughing, Nell; I am serious. We have been talking all the morning, and Sophy and I have got full half-way down that well where Truth lies at the bottom,—that is, I think so. Will you answer my questions—any questions I may ask,—answer them seriously; and if you don't know the answers, will you say so, and give no guesses of your own?"

Nell was grave now. She promised to do as

James wished.

"Then," said James, "take off bonnet and shawl, and make yourself comfortable for an hour or two; I shall not be easily satisfied."

After these preparations for business had been gone through, and Nell had had two or three more

laughs, the friends were once more seated, and James began:

"Let your answers be 'Yes' or 'No,' whenever

you can make them so."

"Yes," said Nell, strangling a laugh at James's

odd way of beginning.

James smiled in return; and then, after a pause, said, "You think your Church the only true Church?"

" Yes."

"Do you think that your priests and bishops have come down, by ordination, from the Apostles?"

" Yes."

"Do you think that ordination makes them more than other men?"

" Of course I do."

"Why of course?"

"If a priest, after ordination, can do things which he couldn't do before his ordination, when he was like other men and not a priest, then, of course, ordination has made him more than other men."

There was a pause. Nell Cary did not laugh now: she looked very earnest; and in her heart she was saying a prayer for a blessing on those words.

- "What, now, as short as you can tell it, is the work of a priest?"
 - "His work is to save souls."
 - "And how does he save souls?"
- "He teaches the true doctrine of our Lord Jesus, which is kept by the Church. He exercises that power which our Blessed Lord gave to

the priesthood, when he said, 'Do this for a commemoration of Me.' When he says Mass, the bread and wine become the real Body and Blood of Christ. In the Mass, he offers this real Body and Blood as a sacrifice to God, for God's own and Blood as a sacrifice to God, for God's own honour and glory, and to give Him thanks, and also to get pardon for our sins and His blessing and grace. When we go to Communion, the priest gives us this Blessed Sacrament that we may live by Jesus Christ, abiding in Him and He in us, and be raised up at the last day, and have everlasting life. And he has to prepare us for this Sacrament by another, in which he exercises that other great power left by our Lord to the Apostles and their successors—the forgiveness of sins when we repeat and confess them. These of sins, when we repent and confess them. These things are the work of the priests: and more, James, they are our guides, our friends;—nay, more, our servants,—our servants, for they are to smooth our path to heaven in every possible way, to encourage the faint-hearted, to help the weak, to watch the uncertain, to direct the strong, to go after sinners, to persuade the wanderer to return. Oh, James!" exclaimed Nell, "and they do all I say, and more than I know how to say; but my

heart feels it all, and my heart has found it true."

Nelly's bright face was bright still, but now bright with tears. Her voice scarcely faltered; but her earnest countenance and her pleading tears fixed the attention of her hearers, and they let her go on without any interruption.

"Oh, James!" she cried, "indeed, indeed, it is all true. When a father cannot guide, and when a mother is no help,—when there is no friend on

earth to be trusted, there is always God's priest. The Lord Jesus was the physician of souls in more ways than by the great sacrifice of the cross, and so from His servants we get that sympathy which has nothing human in it, but comes from God Himself. Jesus said to them, 'He that hears you hears Me,' and this comes true in many ways. Besides being teachers of the true doctrine, they bind up the broken heart, and pour in the oil and wine to heal the bruises caused by this world's trials. And often, very often, when the stricken spirit and the tried and tempted soul could not-no, really could not-tell its sorrows to any being upon the earth besides, it can pour every thing out at the foot of the Cross, by the side of God's servants in the holiness of the confessional, and get in return the strength that is wanted, and the healing that is required."

"This is truth," said James. The tears were coursing down Sophy's cheeks. "This is truth. And it is right. It is as it should be. It is what might be expected of teachers who claim to be sent from God. Sophy, we must know more about this Church, which claims to be—The only

Truth."

Sophy gave her husband a willing and an approving smile. Then, glancing at Nell, she said, "There is more in her heart, James. Make her tell it all."

"Go on, Nelly; let us hear every thing. I want to know all that can be told. Go on with the rest."

"There is nothing more to say, James," answered Nell Cary. "The Church is God's legacy to this earth. And the Church will preserve His

faith, and work His interests till He comes for judgment. It must last, and it cannot err, because it is the Divine institution for doing the Divine will, and that will is the saving of souls. And the Bishops and Priests, with the Pope at their head, who is the earthly head of the Church, and the successor of St. Peter—they receive God's gift for doing God's work, and they do it. There is nothing more to say."

In spite of Nell's calm smile, as she ceased speaking there came a struggling sigh which almost choked her. And James Chapman, who wanted to know something of people's experience of the working of the Church, wished very much to know what made that sigh swell up so heavily. He determined to ask. He spoke very kindly,

"Nelly," he said, "I know, by your manner and way of speaking, that you could tell me something that would make me understand better what friends these true teachers may be. You have had trials, I am sure. Tell us your story; we will never gossip;—I have got a strong feeling that it would do us good to hear it."

"I would tell it to do you or Sophy good, or to give you encouragement to go on and inquire more about the true Church. Not that my story is much; it is only a history of a weak girl and of a

strong unerring guide."
"Go on," said James.

"You know Jobson?" inquired Nell.

"Jobson!" exclaimed Chapman—" Jobson who was once a mason, and worked under me, and is now a mission-man, or some such quack?"

"Who was once a Catholic, and now runs down the cause of Christ for pay," said Nelly, softly and

James Chapman uttered a groan. He was very much surprised. He gave a shudder; but he respected poor Nell's feelings too much to laugh at Jobson, as he generally did. He only said, "I know him, Nell; but what could he ever have

had to do with you?"

"I loved him so true, James," answered Nell, in the most simple and innocent way; "I really did. My mother and Mrs. Jobson had long been friends, and I had known Jobson from a child. And he had asked me to marry him, and I had said that I would when he could maintain me. But we never kept in each other's company as some might have done; we were not so positively engaged to each other; only I should always have been true to him. After awhile, Jobson began to neglect his religion; it half broke my heart, but I didn't let him know it; I prayed for him though, and had no comfort in any thing else. Then his mother, who had never been a proper observer of the rules of the Church, she got to work with the family at Morland House. For the sake of their work the pretended to be a Protestant,—that is, she left off Mass altogether, and never went any where. Now, Jobson had had a very good education for a working-man in the Catholic school, and as the family at Morland House wanted a Scripturereader, they proposed to engage him; and as the offer was a good one, he sold his Church and his Saviour for it, and goes about as you know. I don't think that they like his preaching very much.

But Jobson is clever. If he was to get by any accident out of their pay, he would fall back upon preaching; it is well for such as he is to have two irons in the fire."

"But you didn't break your heart about him, I suppose?" said James contemptuously.
"Well, James," said Nell, speaking pretty firmly, "you must have patience with me if I did, very nearly. I'll tell you exactly how it was, and Sophy will understand me, and you too, I fancy."

Sophy and her husband were very much inte-

rested, and again told Nelly to go on with he story, and said that they should certainly under-

stand her.

"You see," said Nelly, "I had thought of it, and expected it so long—from childhood I may say. And though we were not publicly engaged, and never sought each other's company as engaged people do; and though, if Jobson had come to me and said honestly that he had fallen in love with some one else, I should not have felt that I had any right to complain, yet I never expected the trial of having myself to give him up. It would have been easier to my heart for him to have deserted me; easier than to have, with all my love for him, to give him up quietly and steadily, as my religion demanded of me."

"What did Jobson do?" asked James.

"I heard that he had left his religion for Protestant pay several days before I saw him on the subject," answered Nell. "He wanted to marry me directly. He said he could support me well, and that we must not mind my father and mother making a fuss. He said that he had told the

family at Morland House that he wished to marry me, and that I was a Catholic; and that they had no objection to my being a Catholic."

"They expected to convert you," interrupted James. "They would have worked you on the souping principle. Your living would have been in their hands, and the command would have come in due course of time. You would have had to leave the Faith, or your husband his situation."

"I do believe," said Nelly, "that they had made some kind of a bargain; for Jobson told me that they had said that, if my friends and the priests were angry with me for marrying him, they would get him a very good place in Ireland, where we could live very comfortably. And Jobson would have liked to have married me, and gone off to Ireland, and he pressed me very much. It was very hard to bear," added Nelly, after a pause.

"I am sure of it," said Sophy; "but go on,

dear Nelly."

"It was my own honest and true love for him that made it so hard," said Nell. "Though we had been so quiet, yet my feelings had grown so deep. When he came in, I would never reproach him, or seem to care any more than one would naturally care at making so great a change. If he pressed me very hard, I would say, 'No, thank you, Jobson; my mind is made up; I could not think about it any more. What is the use of your working yourself up to be miserable? Do you wish to stay to tea?" And so I would pass the thing off, just as if I was made of wood, or as if I had never loved him a moment in my life. And oh, so glad I used to be when he was gone—so glad, so very glad. Then I used to feel that, if it had lasted two minutes longer, I should have broken down, and let him know how my poor bruised heart loved him still, and how its deep regrets had very nearly been my death."

"What a trial to bear all alone!" exclaimed

"What a trial to bear all alone!" exclaimed Sophy; "you should have told your mother."

"I could not tell either mother or father," answered Nell. "You know what poor dear father is, James?" James nodded his head. He knew very well that Ambrose Cary was an habitual drunkard, and a terrible curser and swearer.

"There was no telling him, you see. And mother-who is a dear good mother, and a good woman in every way—she gets her living nursing, and is seldom at home; and she had never known about Jobson and me, and she could not have been told. In the houses she goes to, there is a great deal of talking, and my love lay so deep in my heart that I could not have it made a talk of. So now I had to meet the trial alone; and after a time I thought that I had made Jobson see that I was quite determined in my refusal of him, and could never be his wife. He ceased to come to our house, and I scarcely saw him for many weeks. It was such a desolation to me. The thought that had made every thing bright lay dead and cold. And sometimes, as I sat binding the shoes, I dwelt upon what might have been, and what ought to have been, till I was like a creature in a dream. And when I woke up to the real truth of Jobson being a deceitful Protestant-a poor, mean sinner, and of my being left alone, I used to feel half mad."

"Poor girl, poor Nelly!" said James and Sophy.
"Let us hear how it ended."

"I began to meet Jobson again. He did not speak of our former love; but just a little kindly, and very respectfully, as if to make amends for any trial I might have had through him. Then he came again to our house; and at last he began to speak again of marriage, just as if it were a new thing between us. I must confess that it gave me great pleasure—oh, if it could be—if it could only be—oh, if it might be! I might yet be happy with him! My heart kept on crying out, just in that way. I was exactly like a person who had pulled down a house in which she had lived, because it was a badly-arranged one, and had then begun to build it up again, stone by stone, exactly the same, persuading herself that she should find it quite new, another thing, and perfectly convenient.

"I knew the trick my heart was playing me.
I found myself out. But I did not let Jobson find it out. I must always be thankful for that. At last there came an evening when I expected Jobson, and he did not come. I got fidgetty; I wondered, I hoped, I was unhappy, because he did not appear. I was vexed with myself, but I could not deceive myself; the old feelings were getting uppermost, and I was loving that undeserving man too well. At last I got into such a state that I quite longed to hear his step; I would have given any thing I could command in the world to see him sitting by my side again. But conscience got up and reproached me. I was a Catholic, and I knew that it was wrong to let my fancy grow so strong. I was sorrowful, disappointed, and angry, all at once. I ran up stairs to my own little room, and dropping upon my knees, I prayed that I might not grow to be the captive of my unruly will."

"That was very good," said James; "but there is something new to me in a young girl praying to God that she might not fall too deeply in love,—for that is the plain English of your prayer,

Nelly."

"I won't deny it, James; but we are intended to rule our passions; we are not to allow them to rule us."

"That is one of your good sayings; I like it.

But go on."

"I rose up from my knees feeling quite guilty. I had given way too much. But I also felt afraid, —afraid of myself. I had not strength in myself for the trial; so I went where I could know God's will, and get strength to do it."

"Where was that?" exclaimed James.

"To God's servant, and my director,—I went to confession to Father Francis."

"This is the most interesting part of all," said James. "Do you mean to say that you told him all the story as plainly as you have been telling

Sophy and me?"

"More plainly, more simply, if possible," answered Nelly. "Just exactly, James, as you may fancy a woman going to our Blessed Lord for advice, and for strength to follow it, if He was again upon earth: just as you or I, desiring above

any thing to live to His honour, might in that case go and kneel down at His side, and make an act of love to Him, and ask Him to look into our hearts, and see by His divine power the trial that crushed and fevered and puzzled it, and cure it,—exactly so does a Catholic go to confession. Only, as the servant and priest of God, with whom Jesus left the power of forgiving sins in His name, cannot see your heart as his Master can and does at that very moment,—as the priest cannot see your heart, you are obliged to put your trial into words. You say that which Jesus sees, and are full of love, and full of faith; that is a good confession. Of course love and faith include a great deal, but that is the simplest way in which I can describe a good confession."

"And you made it, I am sure," said James Chapman. "But were you cured?"

"Yes," said Nelly, with a smile.

"And what did Father Francis say?" asked Sophy, who had been listening with deep attention.

"I wish I could tell you every word. But I can't do that. He said that my first resolution had been right, and that I must not wilfully put myself in the way of temptation. He stirred up in me a fresh desire to keep my baptismal vows, and always to live to God's glory. And then he seemed to make the way of self-denial quite easy by exciting me to love God. I wish I could say it as he said it. It was something in this way, —but you must excuse my dull words;—it was not dull when it came gently and earnestly from his consecrated lips. I was to think of how, if I

could have seen and known our Blessed Lord upon earth, I should have loved to do any thing to give Him pleasure or honour. What self-denial would I not have endured, what earthly pleasure would I not have given up, to have shown Him, as He laboured up to Calvary, that I had no union of heart with His persecutors; with those who were then loading Him with dishonour, and treating Him with cruelty and contempt! Then he said that we could still do things for the honour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and that we should strive and pray to be able to think of Him with such love and gratitude as should turn all selfdenial for His sake into a willing sacrifice. He taught me that my trial was an occasion of showing to God that I loved His honour better than my own will, or any thing else-or, at least, that I desired to do so. And he assured me that, if I used with all my heart some devotions which he pointed out to me, and did my best, I should soon not only be willing to give up my former hopes, but by God's grace even find a great joy in giving them up."

"What do you think of that, Sophy?" asked

James of his wife.

"I think that she was directed to that very state of mind which I have been longing after for years," answered Sophy. "But how did it end,

Nelly?"

"I did as Father Francis told me. I renewed my vows to God; I received holy communion. I never looked back upon the past. I determined to suffer this trial willingly for my Saviour's honour. And after a little all trouble passed away, and I was quite cheerful and glad. Really I never think of it with any feeling of misery now."

"What did you shed those tears about?" asked

James very quickly.

"The trouble left behind it so strong a sense of the goodness of God, of His mercy in providing us with the Church and the Sacraments, and of the great power which He has given to His priests, that I could not help a few tears of wonder and gratitude. Oh, James and Sophy, I wish you could believe!"

After Nell Cary was gone, James repeated those words, "I wish you could believe;" and he said to his wife that he thought that he might believe if it were not for one wonderful thing. And what was that? It was the wonderful sight of the bad lives of many Catholics—"Ambrose Cary, for instance," said James. "Fancy a man cursing and swearing and drinking, and believing what that girl believes! I can't make it out."





CHAPTER VI.

A GOOD PROTESTANT.

the next morning came, and with it came early rising, early sweeping, and an early airing of the house.

Breakfast, too, of fragrant coffee, bread and butter, and the remainder

of the last evening's cake. James, as fresh and bright as usual; Sophy, like herself, gentle, cheerful, steady, and perfectly neat and clean; and Aunt Anny, not quite as good-tempered and cheerful as she commonly was, so that James began to ponder within himself as to what had "put her out." Was it because she had found Nell Cary with them the evening before? No, surely, it couldn't be that. Aunt Anny liked a fling at the Catholics, but she could find no real fault with Nell herself. What could the matter be? Still Mrs. Millet said little, looked grave, and sometimes deeply sighed. "She eats a good breakfast, however," said James to himself. "I must ask what the matter is."

"Well, aunt, had you a pleasant tea-party last night? How is Mrs. Tatler?"

"Mrs. Tatler was very well."

"Did you go to any church, chapel, Scripture-reader's prayer-meeting, or such like?" asked James.

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Millet, a little

indignantly.

James, who was apt to follow out his own lines of thought in a straightforward way, said, in explanation, "Did you go to any place of Christian worship? and if you did, to which of the many Christianities in this town did you go?"

Mrs. Millet stared at her nephew, with astonishment pictured on her face; for he had never shown himself interested in her chapel-goings before. James, still eating his breakfast, went on without

observing her surprise.

"There are so many Christianities in this town, that one has a pretty large choice. You might have gone to The Christians; The Christian Union; The Christian Association; The Orthodox Christians; The Original Christians; The United Christians; The Gospel Christians; The Free-thinking Christians; The Protestant Christians; The Temperance Christians; The Christian Israelites—well, what a joke!—fancy all these and a dozen or two more, all thinking themselves right, and all wishing that I would choose some minister to sit under, and all agreeing that I have a right to choose any one just as I please, and change him for some one else any moment I like, just as I may change my hat, or suit myself with a new pair of shoes! Oh, dear me! as if any man of common sense could believe that!"

"You are very strong about common sense, James," said his aunt, rather sharply. "But we have no

right to run after different sects in that way; you never heard any one say that we had."
"No, never," said James. "You don't say it,

but you do it."

"Oh, James!" exclaimed Mrs. Millet with almost a sneer.

"Don't contradict your aunt so," said Sophy.
"What, both against me!" cried James, with the broadest of smiles. "Now I'll vindicate my character, and count up all that I have known youyou yourself, my dear old Aunt Millet—believe in, within the last twenty years. Haven't you been dipped with the Baptists, and haven't you told your experience with the Wesleyans, and are you not an Independent now?"

"I have only tried to save my soul, James."
"That I believe from the bottom of my heart," said James. "I only prove, by what I am saying, that you have never known how to save it, and that you don't know now. Once you followed the Calvinists for months; then you gave up that, and followed Lady Huntingdon's gospel. Then, you know, you gave yourself up to reading the prophecies, even till you could expound them yourself, or, till you thought that you could, and nothing would do but the Millenarians; and have you not said that the Free-thinkers were wonderful people, and might do good? And at this moment you do not know

whether Joanna Southcott was right or wrong."

"Still, James," said Mrs. Millet—but she was half crying,—"still, James, I have had but one wish

-to save my soul."

"I know it, my dear aunt,-I know that very well; but you have never known how to save it.

Were you not crying with delight, and were you not nearly, or quite ready, to go off with those Mormonites, whom I thought mad, when you heard them singing a hymn—'Jerusalem, Jerusalem!'"

"It was very touching," sighed Mrs. Millet.

"And so those niggers were touching, who wore their shirts outside and a well-blacked leather round their bodies."

"Now don't, James !" interrupted Mrs. Millet.

"But I will," said James, laughing. "Let me see, what were they to do?—do? evangelise the nations. Why, you lost your heart to their black faces and their broken English. How much did you give them?"

All this time Aunt Millet was trying to stop James by every means in her power; she even put her hand before his mouth. But James held her hand, and made Sophy, who was laughing, turn

round and show her face.

"A very little more and she would have eloped with them. A well-dressed rogue, calling himself a missionary of course, took the blacks about, and a basket of small figures, which he said were the idols these black gentlemen had formerly worshipped until they heard him, when 'they cast them to the moles and bats'—Wasn't that it? He and his black brothers thought they had a mission to evangelise the people of England. In spite of all those Christianities which I mentioned just now, where should they come but to this very town? and they had a congregation round them of a thousand people in a very short time. The missionary made an address, and put these blacks through a short cate-

chism; and then one made a prayer, and the other preached a short sermon, and all three sung a hymn. And thus this old aunt of mine—don't now, aunt, you know it's true!-when she heard the blacks sing, she gave them all she had, and ran back to the shop and robbed the till, and made up her mind to take in washing till she could pay me back again."

Here Sophy laughed out loud.

"They went off by the railway. But, believe me, the missionary robbed a lady of her purse, and all three were taken by the police. The missionary, who was an old offender, was transported; and the other two were washed white, and, after a month at the treadmill, were returned to the world in their true characters "

Sophy could not but be sorry for Mrs. Millet; for, fond as she was of her nephew, she looked vexed and felt ashamed at his plain speaking.

"Indeed, James," said Sophy, "she ought to be pitied. Perhaps your aunt is only inquiring, as

we are."

"She has inquired so long, and changed so often, that I wonder she believes any thing. But oh, she

has wonderful powers of believing! She believes in her sweet preacher of yesterday—"
"A vagabond!" exclaimed Mrs. Millet, with great animation-"a vagabond-oh, I heard such things of him from Mrs. Tatler. Mr. Coke is so sorry that he should have lent him his pulpit. And only to think that I should have admired him so. He made me go hot and cold as I listened to him; such a striking way he had, and is, after all, such a man!—starves his children, ill-treats his wife, is the pleasantest creature on earth with strangers, and as sulky as a bear at home."

"Now we know the cause of the sad looks this morning," said James. "The swan was a goose."

"Goes about preaching for missions, and putting the money in his own pocket; and so eloquent against the Catholics, and so fervent; he said so beautifully that he only desired to go to an Irish mission, where he could spend and be spent—"

"Yes, yes, spend; I'll warrant him to spend," said James. "Why that buying up of the souls of the starving Irish is the most expensive pleasure that ever was taken in hand. And I don't believe in the conversions. The old Catholics, as far as we can see, never become any thing else. They may leave their religion for a time through pride and bad tempers, which I think very low and mean; for it's just judging Almighty God, and one must despise a man who thinks to do that; or they may pretend to leave it from fear of starvation; but they don't become any thing else, unless in the case of such a hypocrite as Jobson—"

"Jobson!" exclaimed Mrs. Millet.

"Yes, Jobson. He was a Catholic once."

"But why must he be a hypocrite?" asked Aunt Anny, looking very stedfastly into James's face. "James, I think you are growing fond of those Catholics. Now, every body agrees that they are wrong; and there's an old saying, 'What every body says must have truth in it."

"Except in religion," answered James.

"And why that exception?" asked Aunt Anny.

"And the world neither loves God, nor His message, nor His ministers. I believe that the Catholic Church is the Divine institution for teaching the true doctrine and saving souls. Of course the world hates it."

"Are you going to change?" asked Mrs. Millet breathlessly.

"Perhaps I am," said James. "But now I am

going to my work."

James went to his work; and Aunt Anny said that she could not get over it. Three times that day she went out to talk with Mrs. Tatler; and they mourned over James, and said it had come upon them like a hurricane, or an earthquake, all in a minute; and much they wondered what was to come next! Ah, no one knew what was to come next!

But James went to his work, and Sophy to her household duties. And the spirit of prayer was strong within Sophy's breast; and the old petition that, in her former puzzled state of mind, she had so often uttered—never checking it, but sending it up to her heavenly Father at all times and seasons, and in so many ways,—sitting, standing, walking, working, and often, very often, when no one saw her, from her knees,—the old prayer, "Oh Lord, I want to be saved. My desire is to get to heaven. Remember me, and have mercy on me,"—was often said that day. And now she offered it for her husband as well as for herself.

It was late in the evening when James was returning; for his work had been at a house a few miles distant in the country. He advanced towards the town by the bank of a river which filled the

docks, and helped to make the place prosperous as a sea-port. Walking up the broad flat low-lands, he thought of the one true Church, and how wonderful she had already begun to appear in his eyes; uttering one, and only one story, amid the Protestant confusion around her. He thought of the victory over the passions that it had taught and strengthened that young girl to fight and win, and of the reward of peace that she had obtained; not disabled in the conflict, but stronger for the fight -more full of love, more full of trust, firmer in faith, happier for her experience. "Yes," he said to himself, "if the Catholic Church is a Divine institution, this is just what common sense might expect; a free unreserved service, a full unmeasured reward,—just as Christ Himself said, 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' To strip oneself of all self-will, like the humblest and most ardent of servants, and to obtain a conqueror's strength, and full freedom of spirit in return. Yes," said James Chapman, "I can understand that." reached the houses just as these thoughts ended.

Now between these first houses—which made the suburbs of the town—and the river, there was, for about 300 yards, only a narrow platform for the passengers to tread. It was wide enough for two persons side by side, but not for more; and there was no defence on the side next the river. Beyond this narrow passage there was an open space of turf, and when James got to this open green he saw Nell Cary. She was standing still, as if waiting for some one. He spoke to her. She was waiting for her mother. "She comes back

this evening from Morland Cross," said Nelly. "She has been with Mrs. White at the further side of the village for the last three weeks. She sent to me to meet her here; for she brings home a quantity of clothes to wash, and I am to help to carry it through the town. She is a quarter of an hour behind her time; but perhaps it is only a difference in the clocks."

A large piece of timber was lying near where they stood; the evening was very still, though not bright. "Let us sit down," said James; "I have more to say as a conclusion to our last conversation." So they both sat down.

"I can't understand Catholics leading bad lives, or, at least, becoming the slaves of bad habits, like drunkenness and evil-speaking," said James.

drunkenness and evil-speaking," said James.

"Understand it? Oh, no, James; how should any body understand it? Here as we sit in the stillness of this evening, and look upon the quiet all round, if we recollect that as sure as ever we are alive, and here on this spot of earth, so sure is it that God was born of a woman, and so entered the world that in His human nature He might die for our salvation,—when we think of the infinite love of the Sacred Heart, of the incalculable treasure of the Precious Blood, of the humility of the Cross, it seems to stagger our reason; we fall back upon faith, and cry 'Lord, I believe!' How can any body sin who thinks of these things? And a Catholic must think of these things. He may be a bad Catholic; he may turn away from the Sacraments, and refuse to hear the priest; but he cannot put from his heart the knowledge of God. He

signed himself with the Cross before he could speak plain, and asserted the doctrine of the Holy Trinity every time he blessed himself. When he is bad, he is worse than any body else can be. He is a deserter and a betrayer. He has cast away grace. A bad Catholic is surely the most wonderful thing upon earth;—except one," said Nelly, after a pause.

"What is the exception?" asked James. "As you put it, I can't think of any thing more won-

derful."

"God's long-suffering patience, His active mercy—in a word, God's love. His love is even more wonderful than our ingratitude. James, I am sure that you are going to be a Catholic; and you will learn to love God,—only love can repay for love—and Sophy too.—But there is mother! See, she is just in the narrow part, under the shadow of the first house. You can hardly see her; but she has such a heavy load, I must run to meet her. Good-night. I hope that I haven't talked too much."

"We will talk more another time, if you please," answered James. And he walked on, while Nelly ran forward in the direction of the narrow path.

James soon paused again. He found a friend in the first street, and they stopped to speak. As they stood there, saying it was a fine night, but rather sultry, they heard the sharp yelp of a dog, just as if the animal had been frightened, and in the same moment a splash in the water. "What's that?" said James.

"Some one trying to make his dog swim, I

suppose," said his friend. Immediately a dog passed them, with head and tail down, and at full speed. The friend smiled. "He's off," he said; "no cold-bath to-night for him!" James laughed, and said "Good-night," and walked on. He reached home, got his supper, and went to bed.





CHAPTER VII.

NELL CARY'S REST.

AMES had finished a job of work in the country the very night of which we have been speaking. He intended to take a holiday the next day,—if that

may be called a holiday which was to be devoted to making some little improvements in the house to please Sophy. To keep this holiday James rose very early. Long before the generality of people were stirring, he was taking an early breathing of fresh air at his house-door, and looking up and down the silent street. In a minute or two one person appeared—it was Mrs. Cary. She came nearer and nearer, walking very fast, and would have passed James with only a nod if he had not stopped her.

"How are you this morning, Mrs. Cary? You and I are the first awake in all the town, I think.

"And indeed I was obliged to get up early," said Mrs. Cary; "and a dreadful bad night I have had of it. I couldn't get a half-hour's rest for

thinking of Nell. She was to have met me at the beginning of the town last night, to have carried one of my bundles through the streets; for I was loaded like a pack-horse. And the neighbours say that she started at the proper hour; but I never met her, and I think she must have walked on to the fields to meet me. You know that there are two paths; I fancy that she took one, and I took the other. And, I suppose that when she got to Mrs. White's, and found that I was gone, she must have stayed there all night—it must have been very late."

Å cold weight of dreadful fear penetrated through James's heart as he listened to Mrs. Cary's words. He knew the truth, it seemed to him, as certainly as if he had seen it. Nelly had been startled by the dog, and had fallen into the river. She was

dead.

He trembled from head to foot; icy drops burst out upon his forehead; when he tried to speak, he could find no voice, and he bit his palsied lips to restore some warmth and power to them. At last, with a great effort, he spoke. He spoke quickly, and with a forced laugh. "Don't go to Morland Cross; I'm going there myself; I shall be off in ten minutes, and I shall get there in half the time that you would take. Trust me to send her back." "Are you really going?" asked Mrs. Cary. "Indeed I should be glad to be saved the walk. But I am anxious about Nell. She never missed an appointment, or stayed out all night before in her life. I've pretended that I know all about it to her father; he'd be so angry, and I know it's only a mistake. To keep him quiet—if I must tell the

truth—I would gladly stay at home. If he misses me, he'll get at the truth; and he is so hot."

"I will be with you again by nine o'clock. Trust me—I'll find out about Nell. Go home, go

home; I ought to be off."

With many thanks, Mrs. Cary went away.

James stood still in deep thought. Should he go to Morland Cross? No. If the mother and daughter had not met in that narrow path, then only one thing could have happened. What was he to do? Suddenly he came to a resolution. He would go to the priest. He could scarcely believe it was himself, when he stood at the priest's door, and lifted the knocker, and gave a loud rap. A thought—what a strange thing that I should be here!—passed across his mind. But there was no hesitation. At that moment James Chapman held the Catholic truth about the Sacrament of Orders; and though he was only going to the priest as a friend, yet it was as far more than a common friend, or as a friend powerful in any worldly sense. He was going to one on whom the gift of the Holy Ghost had fallen; who had become from that moment different from all common men; who was, more than other men, and in a peculiar sense, the servant of God; who was set apart to administer the Sacraments, which "are the treasures of Holy Church."

James Chapman was going to speak to a priest. Quicker than the pen can write, faster than the tongue can speak, the thoughts chased through his mind. He was going to speak to a priest! He had seen priests—that is, he had seen men passing peaceably through the public streets, of a

self-possessed demeanour, giving no creature any offence, and having nothing vindictive, unkind, or passionate in their appearance; and now and then people had said to him, "That's a priest!" And then they had proceeded to abuse him very heartily. But James had always said, "Their own people don't abuse them; those who know them best love them with a respect and veneration totally unknown to us." "Ah, yes," the enemies would reply; "yes, their own people—but there lies the mischief." "And there lies the argument," James had replied. "Those who know them best value them most; they have better opportunities of judging than either you or I. I shall not join in any outcry against them; it would be against common sense, if I did."

But we are leaving James a long time at the priest's door. In fact, he had to knock three times, which a little surprised him. Of course he expected perfection even in the matter of the doorbell. He did not know that the cook was gone with gruel to a sick woman, and that the housemaid was getting the candles lighted, and the altar ready for the first Mass. However, when she was coming in from the chapel, she heard the third knock; it was very loud, and sounded impatient, and she opened the door.

Seeing a stranger, she rather stared. "I want the priest," said James, very hurriedly. "Which?" said the woman, in a style thought by James to be dreadfully quiet. "Any body—either—Father Francis!" uttered James, trying to push past her, and in a very agitated way. But the woman stood firm in the doorway. "Please to tell what

you want," she said quietly, but with great firmness. Poor James! he recollected himself. He looked at her as calmly as he could. "It is a case of life and death perhaps," he said. "I really don't know what to do. Father Francis could tell me. If he is not at home, the other—any body, provided he is a priest." "Step inside; this way," said the servant, with a kind and rather altered manner. And she showed James into a room on the right-hand side.

James Chapman's eyes wandered round the room in which he stood. He looked at a picture of our Lord upon the cross; he bowed his head and crossed his hands upon his breast in reverence. He thought of Nelly the evening before.-" As sure as the sun shines this day, so sure it once shone on that!" He said it out loud; the tears sprang to his eyes; the door opened and shut, and James felt something earnest and solemn at his heart. He was there, alone with a priest of God's church, and he had to speak. The idea of one God, one faith, one baptism admitting into the one Church; and that Church with her own succession of priests administering, by the sacraments, her own rich treasures of grace-that Church, our blessed Saviour's Witness, His Beloved, His Spouse - existing to the glory of God the Father, with the power of God the Holy Ghost the Comforter abiding in him, and with whom it is the delight of God the Son, Jesus the Saviour of the world, to dwell! All this was in James Chapman's mind quite clearly.

He turned towards a tall, thin, but rather large-

framed man; -but all that James thought of was,

that he was the priest of God.

"Oh, sir," James cried out, "Nell Cary is lost -and I am sure that she is drowned; -you know Nell Cary, sir?"

" Eleanor Cary? Yes, I know her very well. What do you mean by saying she is drowned?"

"Last night she was going to meet her mother, who was returning from Morland Cross. I met her on the little green. We stopped and talked-I believe that that girl is the best friend I ever had in my life. We saw her mother come through the turnstile at the end of the pathway by the river-side, behind the houses in Brook-street. Nelly ran on to meet her. I saw Nelly pass the turnstile on this side. I went on. I heard a splash in the river; I heard the bark of a dog. was speaking to a friend; we neither of us thought any thing of it. But this morning I have seen Mrs. Cary. She never met Nell. She fancies that Nell got as far as the fields and took the higher path to Morland Cross; but Nelly is in the river-she is dead. I sent Mrs. Cary home, and promised to go for her daughter myself. But oh, sir-oh, Father Francis-she'll never see that girl again on earth. And what am I to do?"

A glance at the priest's face showed James that he had come to the right person. Yet he spoke firmly: "Go," he said, "to the place in Brook-street where the river-drags are kept. Tell them to get them out. I will go to the Carys; and I will come, or send to you in Brook-street immediately." He had moved towards the door as he

spoke. James passed him and ran into the passage. He only gave one glance back; he saw the priest put on his hat; he saw his lips moving, he saw sorrow on his face. James left the housedoor open and stepped quickly forward. Before James got to Brook-street he met many people. He did not at first observe how busy, and occupied, and talkative they seemed. At last a larger group, and a woman weeping, attracted his attention. He stopped and asked what was the matter. The answer he almost expected. "A woman found down on the moor; she is dead, drowned."

"Who is she?" exclaimed James.

"Oh, she's owned; but I don't know her name," was the answer from many mouths.

James darted forward. He met some men.

"Where is the body?" he cried out to them.

"Royal Oak, Brook-street," was the reply.

And James ran as fast as he could go.

James soon got to the house. Crowds of people were round the door. He forced his way through; but as he effected his entrance, he was shocked to find from what was said around him that an idea prevailed that Nell Cary had purposely thrown herself into the river, and that she had done it because she had been crossed in love, and that the priests—and here, of course, followed a burst of abuse—had prevented her marrying Jobson, and that Mrs. Tatler had been the first person to recognise the body, and that all this had been learnt from her.

Amidst all this falsehood and evil-judgment in this noise of a thousand tongues—vexed in his generous temper, and sad in his affectionate heart, James toiled through the people, and struggled up the stone steps that led to the open door of the house. When he got there, the desire to correct the slander on poor Nelly made him pause. He took off his hat and called out to the people: "There is not one word of truth in what is saying in this crowd. She was not crossed in love, and never committed suicide: she was too good and too religious to have ended her life in such defiance of God. I was the last person who saw her alive, and—"

"Come, come," said a policeman, "no speechifying—no haranguing the mob. If you have any thing to say, you must be examined at the in-

quest."

"And I hope I shall be examined," answered James; "but it's enough to make an honest man crazy to hear how ready people are to do their

neighbours an injury."

"Oh, you know nothing of life," said the man.
"You see the people like the worst story better
than the best; and what people like, that they will
have. What's an accident? Nothing! Accidents happen every day; but drowned all because
a priest's advice came between the girl and her true
love—now that's a story worth having."

"But it's a lie!" cried out James very angrily.

"What difference is that?" said the policeman.
"Where have you lived that you have yet to learn this maxim, 'Any thing against a Popish priest is good in the gossip-market for high and low, rich and poor'—mind that, when you turn to being a popular man. Now, do you want to see the body?"

No words can describe James Chapman's dis-

gust. With his first thoughts of the true religion young and tender within his breast, he felt his heart quite bruised on hearing such coarseness. There was something so unkind in running down the dead and the living in that heartless way; and it was so terribly untrue. But he felt that it was of no use to speak—so he entered at an open door, and stood still in the presence of death. A figure lay upon a mattress, a sheet enveloped all the body up to the neck; the head was rested on a pillow, and it drooped a little on one side. But there lay the long golden hair, still darkened in places by the water which remained in its soft and beautiful masses, and the lids were closed over the eves which had so suddenly looked their last on this world of faith and unbelief-this battle-field of the Church.

James Chapman advanced to the head of the body, and there knelt down. He prayed, yet not in words. His whole heart seemed to go up to God. He knew that there were people walking this world who looked like other people, and yet, because they were within the fold of Christ's Church, were not like other people: one of them, a woman, young, and left greatly to herself, of unusual gaiety of heart and of uncommon beauty, he had known well enough to be led through that knowledge to see the life within.

His whole heart went up to God; he desired to be the child of Holy Mother Church; he felt that he could lay all cavilling down, and kneel at Her servant's feet and hear and obey. His whole heart went up to God, because he knew that this Church, for which his soul longed, was not made by man, but was the gift of God. His heart went up like the heart of a little child, all willingness, and faith, and love.

Presently some one came to his side and spoke. "You are wanted particularly by Father Francis at Ambrose Cary's,—he wants you there."

James got up directly. He gave one glance of the most intense respect towards the corpse, and then left the room and the house. He walked briskly into the town. He had to pass his own door. He went in for one moment. Sophy had heard of her friend's death, and was shedding tears. James could only say that he was obliged to go to Ambrose Cary's house, but that he would return directly, and tell her every thing. In another moment he was at that poor father's door.





CHAPTER VIII.

I CAN'T HELP BELIEVING.

OPHY waited for her husband for an hour, and yet he did not appear. She was was feeling half-frightened. Aunt Anny got fidgetty, and she went out to visit

a neighbour, and hear any thing that there might be to learn. But Sophy stayed at home, and wondered, and waited for her husband. And at last, after nearly two hours' absence, James Chapman arrived. He looked pale and worn, and very grave. "Where is Aunt Anny?" he said, looking round.

"She is gone out for a little while."

"I am glad of it," said James. "I want to tell you all that I have seen, and all that I have felt; and it is well to be alone."

"Please to begin then," said Sophy, "for indeed

I am very anxious."

James sat down, and began his story.

"You know that I was sent for by Father Francis. When I got to Ambrose Cary's house, I found a great number of people round the door, and a crowd even extending up the street. I asked the cause of such an assemblage, and I was told"—James stop-

ped for a moment. Sophy saw a look of displeasure pass across his face. She begged him to go on. "I must go back to Father Francis," said James, recovering himself. "When he got to Ambrose Cary's house, he found that the provoking tongues of wicked gossips had been there before him. Mrs. Tatler, and some others like her, had already told the unfortunate parents of Nell's death, and had told her poor hot-headed, intemperate father that she had drowned herself for love of Jobson."

"How dreadful—how untrue!" exclaimed Sophy.
"Yes, yes," interrupted her husband; "but they
had already said it at the Royal Oak, where the
body is lying, and I had heard half the town re-

peating the story when I was there."

"What did Ambrose say? He loved his daughter, and was very proud of her; and she was their only one—poor man! what a trial! but what did he say?"

"He denied it with a thousand oaths, like a man mad with sorrow and vexation; and then Mrs. Tatler insisted upon it, and said that she had seen Nelly sitting on a piece of timber with Jobson close to the river-side only a little before dark."

"Oh, terrible?" cried Sophy. "Was there no one there to contradict her? She saw you."

"No one contradicted her, but dozens confirmed the story. Some other woman, from somebodyelse's garret-window, had seen the poor girl and me, and all were ready to swear to all that Mrs. Tatler said."

"And Ambrose Cary?" said Sophy, breath-

"Ambrose Cary, when he heard so many voices bearing false-witness—he, in a strong paroxysm of passion, and swelled and distorted in the face with bitter rage—he lifted up his arms and clasped his hands above his head, and cursed Jobson—cursed him horribly, and with such power and malice, so awfully, that all the people held their breath, and were in terror; and then, Sophy,—then he fell down in a sort of fit, foaming at the mouth; and when he was revived, it was only to fall into convulsions, and be carried, quite worn out, into his house. Father Francis arrived, and knowing so much from me, he was able to say what consoled the mother. But Ambrose was past hearing, past being comforted ——"

"Not dead!" exclaimed Sophy.

"No, no; not dead. When I got there, I opened the door and went boldly in. Some slight sounds guided me to the room on the left, and I opened the door gently. There, on a long low sort of couch he lay; his head was resting against his wife's arm, and her tears were dropping fast and silently upon his shoulder. She looked up when I came in, and gave me such a look. I knew that I was welcome. But Ambrose was like a man in the agonies of death. A doctor was holding his arm, and in the very act of bleeding him; Father Francis was helping. I stepped forward and took his place. Presently the blood flowed. The poor creature revived: his eyes opened with a strange stare, then closed again. Again they opened, and wandered round the room, and again closed, as if there had been no power of sight in them. The doctor answered to a whisper from Father Francis

that he was in the greatest danger; that he was not likely to live. Several minutes passed; the arm was bound up, some medicine was given to him, he began to heave great sighs, and all at once his eyes fixed on the priest, and he began to sob and cry. Father Francis took the doctor's place by the bed-side. The doctor said, 'I will leave you for ten minutes—he ought not to be agitated; and,' he said, 'if Mrs. Cary can give up her post to her friend, it will be better. Come, Mrs. Cary, come and rest for a few minutes. There will be proved for you to do hy and hy.' I reject Am. come and rest for a few minutes. There will be enough for you to do by and by.' I raised Ambrose up as the doctor directed, and, as he leaned his head against my shoulder, I said, 'Do you know me, Ambrose?' He gave rather a wild look at me, andt hen pronounced my name, Then he looked at Father Francis. 'Is it true,' he said, 'all those people told me?' 'No.' 'Is she dead, and did she do it herself?'—a sort of spasm passed over his face. 'She is dead. But it was an accident. James Chanman knows about 't' 'Part Allances his face. 'She is dead. But it was an accident. James Chapman knows about it.' 'But that man, that other?' Again the spasm came. 'He had nothing to do with it.' Ambrose leaned back against me heavily. There was silence. Father Francis was kneeling by his side. He laid a crucifix on the rug that covered him. Again Ambrose looked up, and spoke; and this time he spoke easily. 'Father,' he said, 'it is all over—I am dying. It has killed me. I am going fast to death.' 'Yes—to death, and'—so tenderly and so earnestly he added the next word—'and to judgment. Have you nothing to think of?' Ambrose trembled from head to foot. Father Francis went on: 'Now join with me—join with your whole on: 'Now join with me-join with your whole

heart—Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

James paused; Sophy looked at him anxiously.

He went on:

"If ever one soul yearned after the purifying of another's, I saw it then!"

"But what did Ambrose answer?"

"Sophy, I can hardly find courage to tell vou. He almost raved. Forgive them; no! Let them come and beg pardon before the dead body of the girl they had traduced, and then he might forgive them; and a great deal more in that way. But it seemed to me as if the priest took little, if any, notice of the words which I listened to so painfully: I thought that he only was aware of the temper of mind that produced them. He was still on his knees, and I could see on his countenance the marks of anxious, striving supplication. Even while Ambrose was speaking, that priest was struggling in prayer to Him whose image was in his hand. And when he spoke, it seemed to me as if the crucifix itself was pleading. The thorn-crowned head, the agonized limbs, the scourged body, the bleeding wounds, all seemed to cry out-forgive! Could they cry in vain? And, with all his tenderness, all his anxiety, all his love, still Father Francis seemed to assure Ambrose that he could never receive forgiveness, if he did not give it. I never lived through such moments before in my life. I thought that Ambrose might die in my arms. I cannot express to you the value which my soul seemed to place on every breath he drew. I felt that heaven hung upon the few moments that might be left to him.

And the earnestness of that priest of Christ's Church pleading between God and man. 'Save him, save him!' and then, 'Be saved.' I knew that his heart was swelling, his spirit wrestling in a strong agony of hope and fear, and faith and love!"

"Well, well," said Sophy eagerly, "but Ambrose?"

"God was merciful," said James. stretched forth his hands towards the crucifix: Father Francis placed it within them; and Ambrose pressed his lips to the Redeemer's feet, and burst into tears—yes, repentant tears, repentant and forgiving tears."

"Thank God!" said Sophy. "Thank God, a thousand times! Oh, what a sight to see!"

"Then Father Francis sent me for the doctor. And after a little time Ambrose would be left alone with the priest; he would go to confession. And now, my dear wife," continued James, "I must say this—that I never thought of what an awful thing it is to die in sin until this day. I am sure that those among whom we live have no idea what an awful thing sin is, have no real horror of it. And, Sophy, when that horror is upon the mind, then we know what is meant by salvation, Jesus, God incarnate, crucified, risen from the dead, and now in Heaven in His glorified body, showing His wounds-He suffered for sin. I seem never to have learnt that before this day. And, Sophy," said James, with great feeling and energy, "they, the Catholics, say that He descends upon their altars daily in the Mass, that still He is theirs, that His delight is to dwell with them, that He is the food of their souls, that in the Mass He is their perpetual sacrifice, that His words, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' are not lost in the world, but are spoken by thousands of His priests to tens of thousands of penitent sinners with all their original power, because of God's gift-His Church! -Sophy, I cannot help believing!"

"Then you have made up your mind?" said Sophy, looking very stedfastly in James's face.

"I have appointed this evening for beginning my confession," said James.
Sophy only smiled, and gave him her hand. But in her heart she felt very glad.

Evening after evening James went to Father Francis. And when he saw the coffin which contained the body of Nell Cary lowered into the grave, he was a Catholic. At this time James had some long jobs of work on hand; but every day he contrived to spare an hour to visit the grateful Mrs. Cary and the penitent Ambrose. It was James Chapman who could best turn Ambrose in his bed, or raise him up, and place the cushions in the great arm-chair. And often, when James was with the sick man, he would send Mrs. Cary out for a little fresh air and pleasant relaxation, and at these times Mrs. Cary always called on Sophy.

It was edifying to see that man's repentance. He knew that, because he had been a bad-living Catholic, his daughter had not dared to make a friend of him; and he thanked God so earnestly for the Church that had done a parent's part to the girl (for James had repeated to him every word that had passed between Nelly and himself),

that it was wonderful to recollect that he had so long disgraced that Church in which he yet so firmly believed. "It is the most wonderful thing upon earth," as Nelly had said, "except one—except God's patience and mercy."

And James had seen that man's hard heart melt

into repentance as that Mercy strove with it, on that bed which had so nearly been the bed of death. The thought made him pray heartily to God for a loving heart towards Him, and a heart of good courage, with the grace to persevere. Many times a-day James prayed heartily for that. Yes, many times every day. "Lord, teach me to love Thee!" That was the constant prayer of his heart. At early morning and at night; when he went out, and when he came in; as he set himself to labour, and when he turned aside to rest—"Lord, teach me to love Thee!" Daily, as God's blessings fed him; as he found his crown in his wife, and comfort in many friends; as he stood in the ripening sunshine, as he watched the descent of the fertilizing rain, always the prayer rose from his grateful, longing, aspiring heart, "Lord, teach me to love Thee!" He did love God all the time, and he felt God's love blessing him in a thousand ways, for he was within the fold of the Good Shepherd, and his soul rested in sweet pastures, and was fed at the fountains of Grace. But God's love towards him was infinite, and, as that young girl had said, "only love can repay love," so he yearned after greater powers of loving, and increased warmth of heart; and so, daily and hourly the prayer burst forth-"Lord, teach me to love Thee!"

It is a prayer God always hears, and always answers. When the heart of man cries out, "Teach me to love," God always hears and answers. Yes; but the All-wise has many ways of teaching; yet He always teaches as He sees best for the seeking soul; and it still remains for man to decide whether he will learn as God proposes to him, or whether he will turn away from the teaching as a wilful child turns from a troublesome task.

And in James Chapman's case, did God in His infinite love and infinite wisdom hear and teach as He was asked? Yes. He did. It would be difficult to imagine a happier man in religion than James Chapman. Every thing seemed to help him. His own straightforward mind; his kind, warm heart: the life and energy of his disposition; his natural courage and gaiety of spirit—all helped him to be a good and happy Catholic—all helped him to love with a generosity of soul which would keep nothing back from the service of God. He was the Lord's. One thought of the precious bloodshedding was enough to lay him at the foot of the Cross,—the whole man prostrate before the Lord of Heaven and earth, the crucified Sin-offering for the world which He had created. That sight had won his heart; the Church which Jesus had instituted was to be his home, and the treasures of Grace which Jesus had left in His Church was to be the life of his soul till he should see the Face of the no-longer hidden God, and read in it Salvation.

James Chapman was very happy. The more he knew of the Church, the more unreservedly he abandoned himself to her teaching,—the more he knew of her Lord, her Master, her Spouse. Every thing she asked of him, it was his joy to do. And when his heart grieved for errors which in the weakness of human nature he committed, and he took his soul to confession, though even the gift of tears was often granted to the recollection of faults which were never wilful, he could not see his Saviour's image, or hear the voice of His priest, without so great a gush of tenderness and joyful thanksgiving, that the Sacrament of Penance was always to him an increase and renewal of love.

One source of joy which opened upon James as a Catholic, was a rich mine of immeasurable wealth to him. It was the thought of the Incarnation. There was something in the thought of God taking flesh that was most attractive and affecting to him. It seemed to James that he could not intreat God by any more powerful words than "By Thy Divine Infancy." That He should condescend to be an Infant! And that, because Bethlehem must precede Calvary—because the Infant must lie within the wood of the manger, that the man might be stretched upon the wood of the Cross—and that Infant, and that Man, God Incarnate! Oh, wonder of wonders! God taking flesh, that He might, by dying on the Cross, save us from sin and hell!

James would pause upon this, and say within himself—"My redemption was begun in the womb of the Blessed Virgin." And so, the moment that he understood the Incarnation rightly, and the more he felt the wonders of God's love, the clearer he saw the greatness of our Blessed Lady's place in earth and heaven. Greatest of all created beings, the immaculate Mother of God!

James Chapman applied every thing to himself. He was not contented with seeing things in a general way, but he would apply things to himself, and feel how he was personally affected. God and Saviour, he would think to himself—his God and Saviour had condescended to require a mother's care, and the precious Body and Blood were formed in her virgin womb. His God and Saviour had, lying in that mother's arms, looked into her face really her son! She had walked her wonderful way, nourishing the human nature which God had taken; and He, the Incarnate God, had given her the duty, the love, and the submission which was her mother's right. Virgin most wonderful, Virgin most powerful, Virgin most renowned, whom all generations shall call blessed! And why? Because of Jesus—because He was born of her—because she is the mother of "Pray for me, holy Mary, Mother of God!" No one ever said that prayer more heartily than James Chapman.

It would take too long to tell how Saints and Angels all took their places in his heart and affections as soon as he had enthroned his Saviour there; it would take too long to tell how he seemed to delight in some above others, although he knew that all had won their crowns and their appointed places round the mercy-seat of God. It would take too long to tell how he loved all mankind in a new and better way for Jesus' sake than he had ever loved them before; and it would take much too long to tell how dear and interesting all

children were in his sight, now that he was a Catholic. All this, and a great deal more, must be left to the reader's imagination, while we hurry on to facts.





CHAPTER IX.

A TIME OF TEACHING.



YEAR of great happiness passed away. Sophy had become a Catholic, and was all that her husband could wish her to be. Ambrose Cary was tolerably strong, and working again at his trade.

Mrs. Cary but seldom went out nursing, and was generally to be found at home. They continued to be on affectionate terms with James and Sophy, and James and Sophy learnt a great deal from them. They got with them into the well-worn, multitude-trodden paths of Catholic life. They made friends among those of the ancient faith. They were members of the living Rosary; they belonged to a society who prayed to die a holy death. Aunt Anny had made up her mind to go to America in the spring of the coming year; but she hoped to see a baby born before that, for Sophy expected to be a mother; and still the constant prayer went up from James Chapman's heart: "Lord, teach me to love Thee!"

When this year of happiness had passed away, a very disagreeable fact impressed itself upon James's mind. He was losing his work. He could not get employment three days in the week. The

shop, which had hitherto been a sort of idle employment, was becoming a serious consideration. They

ment, was becoming a serious consideration. They saw plainly that they could not live without it.

Of course every body observed it, and every body could give reasons for it. Some said that James had offended the family at Morland House because he had spoken against Jobson. Others said he had offended Jobson and his mother by insisting upon Jobson contradicting the report of his having been with Nelly the night before she was drowned; and making Mrs. Jobson withdraw some expressions she had uttered about Nelly leaving her religion for Jobson's sake. Again, it was said that if James had been contented with being a moderate Roman Catholic, it would have been no matter, but that he was such a bigot; he believed in the Virgin Mary, and went too often to Communion. Then he had given offence to a club by refusing to spend Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun-week at the public-house; and had said to somebody that he really did believe that the Holy Ghost came down on the Apostles on Whit-Sunday, and for the purpose of enabling them to preach the gospel of Christ and to plant the Catholic Church; and that he further believed that the Catholic Bishops were in a straight, unbroken line of descent from the Apostles, and that none were priests but those whom they ordained and sent; and he believed Father Francis, for instance, to be a true priest, and that he really had the power of forgiving sins in the Sacrament of Penance. And yet James was not a talker; but he was a freespoken Englishman, and said, that as he lived in a country of private judgment, he did not see why he should keep back his real opinion when he was

asked, or disguise the truth in any way.

But still there were other things whispered against James. He would not eat meat on Fridays. Even when the family at Morland House had sent out a supper of roast-beef on the finishing of the new stables and coach-houses, James had refused meat, and taken only bread with his beer; and perhaps above every thing was this, he did not care the least for being laughed at. It must have been very vexatious to his enemies. He could neither be persuaded by bad arguments or vexed with foolish words. Always sensible, always kind, always full of spirits, and always firm in the Faith. Poor James Chapman! No wonder that English Protestantism disliked him! But he was not only disliked for these things: he was always doing wrong in the eyes of his old friends. He would not read the Protestant Bible; he said that it was only a part of God's word, and that that part had been wilfully and dishonestly corrupted in the translation. He would not go to Protestant meetings and lectures against the true religion-nothing could persuade him to go; and he would insist upon it, that speaking against Holy Church was speaking against God. Moreover, he believed in miracles. Yes, miracles, done in this present day, in the nineteenth century, and he a clever, well-educated man too! -that, of course, could never be forgiven. And other things, again, besides all these. When people wanted to argue about religion, he would not let them have their own way as to certain subjects. For instance, he would not let people who were unbelievers talk about the Blessed Sacrament. He

used to tell them, that if they wanted to know the truth, they must begin at the beginning. They must first learn that there was a Church; but before they had learnt that there was a Church, he would not let them talk about that which is the treasure, the heart, the soul, the very life and existence of Christianity. He could not—he would not bear that they should speak of that august Mystery in his presence, except as it ought to be spoken of—as God Himself.

Could any Protestant understand such a man

as this?

But one more offence we must number in this place. James had found Jobson reading his Protestantism by the side of a poor dying Catholic woman, who was too weak to turn him out, and whose only attendant was a little child ten years old. Jobson was not long in the house after James went in. Jobson gave his friends a terrible account of James's conduct. But on the thing being talked of, and the poor woman being appealed to as a witness, nothing worse was proved than that James had told Jobson not to be afraid, for that he was not going to give him what he deserved; and that he had made him carry away a jug of soup which he had sent there by his mother's servant. But Jobson said that James had called him a "coward;" and James had said, that really he could not remember, but that very likely he had.

After all these things had been observed, and gossipped over, it was perhaps not to be wondered at, that by the end of the year James was weighing rags and counting glass bottles, and feeling

very like a ruined man.

But still the prayer went up from his heart daily, hourly, "Lord, teach me to love Thee!" and James never thought how the Almighty was answering that prayer, and teaching him through trial. He only took care never to murmur, never to fear, and always to love God with his whole heart, and to live in the firm purpose, by the help of His grace, never to offend Him.

Another year began its course, and James was the father of a beautiful boy. Sophy did well, and Mrs. Cary was the best of nurses, and Mrs. Millet the happiest of aunts. So much did Mrs. Millet love the child, that she could not bear to think of going to America in March, as she had settled with her daughter to do. Mrs. Millet began to think of persuading James and his wife and child to go with her. She not only thought, she acted, to go with her. She not only thought, she acted, and very vigorously too. She got her son-in-law to write to James, and say how well he would get on in that country; she told Sophy it was her duty to her child to go where they were sure of prosperity; and she represented to James that he had brought his wife into misery, turned all her relations against her, separated himself from all his friends, reduced himself to poverty, with the prospect of a young family before him, and that it was his plain duty to go where his change of religion would be no disadvantage to him—"into a free country." said Aunt Anny, with the strongest emcountry," said Aunt Anny, with the strongest emphasis.

James received these ideas with a puzzled sort of air; he shook his head and opened his eyes, and walked up and down the room, and sighed very deeply. At last he said, "Well, aunt, you may

be right. England frees the slave and fights for the oppressed; she respects the religious feelings of the Brahmin, and is on the best of terms with the Turk; but her own people, if they are Catholics, she will oppress. I cannot understand it! She says that private judgment is a man's privilege, and even his duty; but when, in the exercise of it, he becomes a Catholic, she refuses him equal rights with other men. Well, aunt, perhaps I should do my duty to my wife and child if I went to America. Perhaps I will go—perhaps we shall go together."

This was enough to make Aunt Anny happy. From that moment she was quite sure that James would go to America in March. They talked of it among themselves; but James would never say positively that he would go, which surprised Aunt Anny, for she had always found James to be a man of clear head, good judgment, and great decision. The truth, however, was, James did not know how to decide in this case. He felt sometimes as if he was being driven by circumstances from the place; but he could not decide in a hurry. He wondered what might be the will of God. He did not wish to run away from any trial which He had sent. When and how could he best love Him?

The baby grew, and was a beautiful boy. But work grew less, and difficulties got greater. Aunt Anny was sorry; but better times and America were coming, she said, and so she would not be over anxious. But Sophy took in plain work, and James took a day's work any where and at any thing that he could do. And a thing they could not help remarking made them smile; it seemed that, as James

was abased, Jobson was exalted. Never did any body get on as that man got on. He was scripturereading and expounding and catechising; he was at prayer-meetings and preachings and lectures. There was a new school-room at Morland, and it was as good as a chapel for him. He collected for societies, and got well paid himself in return; he wrote letters in newspapers, and printed and cir-culated infamous hand-bills against articles of the Catholic faith. And he had his reward. People of great worldly respectability noticed him, and praised and flattered him. He made a good living out of them; and he was promised some post or office which should be a provision for life. Was it better to be a gentleman like this, than to be a poor hard-working Catholic mason? How will Jobson's soul answer that question when it leaves the body for the judgment-seat of God? And there are many other questions which his soul must answer in that awful day of truth. He says that he never knew Jesus till he became a Protestant; but his own Catholic crucifix is in a little drawer up-stairs. He says that the Rosary is a superstitious adoration of the Virgin Mary; but his memory holds fast all the fifteen mysteries, from the Incarnation of our Lord to the finishing of His work, when every saint shall be crowned, and he cannot forget it. He says that the Confessional is folly; but even in his dreams he is haunted by the recollection of the words of God's great commission, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted,"—and oh, how dreadful to him!—"whose sins ye retain, they are retained." He assures his new friends that no poor Catholics understand the

Mass; he says that they don't know what it is. But how, then, comes it that he knows those words—which all know so well—at the elevation of the Host—" Hail eternally, most sacred flesh of Christ, to me before all, and above all, sweetness supreme! The body of our Lord Jesus Christ be to me, a sinner, the way and the life?" How comes he, and how comes his poor old mother, to know such words as these so well? His own memory condemns him. And he says that there is no Purgatory! Oh, Jobson, it will be a happy thing if, in those lowest depths which make that place of mercy awful, there should be found a rest for you!

Time wore on, and March was really come; and yet, though Aunt Anny had been buying and selling, and packing and unpacking for several weeks, James had made no preparations for his departure. He had talked to his wife, but Sophy would not persuade him either way. She was always cheerful, and always tried to make light of their bad circumstances; but she rose with the light to work, and her husband knew it.

He went to see the vessel in which his aunt was to sail. The time was very short now. The captain said he had better take his own berth too; and James almost settled that he would. He left his aunt in the street as they were going home, and he went to the priest's house to see Father Francis. He saw him.

"I am thinking of going to America, sir," said James.

"America! You going?" The priest looked surprised and sorry. James was watching him.

"Well, Father," said he, "I am poor; I have lost work, and I can't get it back again. The broadcloth has got down to fustian"—with a smile at his poor dress; "and my wife's gown would have been scorned for a petticoat two years ago. Mutton and beef have changed to potatoes and salt, and we go to bed to save fire and candles. This is not what I promised Sophy when I married her; and on the other side of the broad waters there is plenty, and I am thinking of going."

"Have you made up your mind?" asked Father Francis.

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

James paused and hesitated.

"Sit down," said the priest, "and speak as freely as you please. Why have you not made up your mind?"

"I don't like the feeling of running away from trial, unless sure that God would have me go. Perhaps it is unreasonable to say and to feel this, but—but—" he hesitated in great confusion——

"Speak out. Tell just what is in your mind. Don't be afraid of my misunderstanding you. Speak easily, and speak it all out: you know you are with a true friend."

"A friend sent by heaven," said James. "Well, Father Francis, I will speak it all out. I love God. He chose poverty. I would not do any thing to throw a disgrace upon the state He chose for all the world. I like the feeling that God is Lord of all things, and gives and takes away. I adore His sovereign will. I know that, as a Christian, I am not in the least bound to stay here and be in bad

circumstances, if I can go to America and be well off. But—I must confess it—I don't dislike this poverty in my inmost heart at all. I can't help being happy. And my wife feels just as I feel. If we were brought down to a stable, we should only be, in outward things, more like Him. If this is a sort of romance, sir, don't scruple to tell me so. It has all been in my heart some time. But one can't talk of oneself easily, except to you," added James, with a smile.

"I don't think it romance," said Father Francis,

quietly.

"But what shall I do about America, sir? Of course people have duties too—to children for instance?"

"Your wife is of your mind?"

"She declared to me, last evening," said James, "that she had never been as happy in her life. You understand, sir, that we make a living, though, in comparison, a very poor one; we have no debts, and our rent is ready. We are honest, and very poor,—that's the whole."

"And very happy," added Father Francis.

"Yes, sir," said James.

"Then don't go to America," said Father Francis.

"Thank you, sir," said James, very briskly, and jumping up with as bright a smile as ever was seen on a man's face—"Thank you, sir. You have said the right thing; I am sure you have. I am happier than ever. Good bye, sir." And so that interview ended.

Aunt Anny went to America, and got there safely; and she wrote the most brilliant accounts of work and wages; but James was not tempted to

travel after her. He replied to her in these words:
"I am not so rash as to say never; but I am still firm enough to say no."
"You don't repent, James?" said Father Francis,

one day, when he called to see them.

"Not a bit, sir; nor does my wife. No, sir, we don't repent at all; we are decidedly happier for the decision which we came to."

"You may grow rich yet," said Father Francis,

smiling.

"Oh, yes, sir, if God wills."
"And should you dislike that?"

"Oh dear, no, not at all," said James, in the most natural manner possible. "If prosperity came in a lawful way, I should take it as God's blessing; and I would hope for grace to love Him more, and serve Him better. But I would not do any thing striving; I would not run risks; I would not speculate for money." culate for money."

"And yet you did not go to America?"
"Ah, sir, I told you all about it once before, and I am of the same mind still. We have common clothes and common food, it is true; but we don't fling ourselves either upon our friends or the parish; nor are we likely to do so; and as Catholics, being very often led to meditate on the mercy, humility, and great love of our Lord in the won-derful mystery of the Incarnation—I say, sir, that as Catholics thinking of Jesus in the manger, Jesus in the house of St. Joseph the Carpenter, Jesus without a place in which to lay His head, Jesus always in poverty—that we get a veneration and a respect for the state which was honoured by His choice, and this lifts us above the opinions of the world. No one can say that James Chapman is an idle beggar, or ruined by extravagance, or in poverty through any vice; that is enough for me. As to my reduced circumstances, I take that as the adorable will of God; He is sovereign Lord of all things, and I cannot wish Him to be any thing else."

It is easy to see that such a full and loving resignation to the will of God must have made James a happy man. Many of his former friends wondered to see him in such constantly good spirits. But Father Francis did not wonder; he gave God thanks.

Of James and Sophy it might be said that they walked with God; and, through His grace constantly poured out upon them in the sacraments of His church, the eyes of their souls regarded Him with such loving firmness that no earth-born cloud could hide Him from them. And if the shadow of His poverty fell upon them, could souls full of love and hearts full of submission grieve over that? Oh, no; impossible! All that had belonged to Jesus was sanctified to them, because they lived united to Him; and they were really happy.

They had been tried in many ways: by trials of temper, by mortifications, by poverty; and now another trial was to come. They were to be tried in their affections. Their beautiful boy died in his father's arms. The child had been ill for a day or two, but Sophy did not think much of it. His father held him, and looked on the treasure lovingly and anxiously. And the child writhed, and stiffened in a fit and died. Sophy saw it all.

In the terror of the moment, she flew to the door, wishing for help. She almost fell against Father Francis. Then she went no further, but burst into tears, and cried, "Oh, come in, come in, for the child is dead!" The priest entered the house hastily. James had laid the beautiful little corpse on the table, and its face was resting gently against one of his hands, while with the other he arranged its little limbs, and stroked its little garments tenderly. But when the servant of God looked on the father's face, he saw, and saw most thankfully, that all was right. The sacrifice had been made as quickly as it had been demanded; and, "Glory be to God!" were the words that rushed up to the priest's lips, and he spoke them out loud. James rested his wife's weeping face upon his breast, and put his arm round her. He too shed tears, and his strong frame shook; he trembled from head to foot. But when he could speak, he said in a low whisper, "Sophy, a glorious Saint has just entered heaven, and it is our son! Heart of Jesus, Heart of Jesus, teach us to rejoice with Thee!"





CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER TRIAL.

NOTHER trial! Dear reader, do not be afraid. It is a trial that few are found to shrink from; it is the trial of "better times."

Better times, however, did not come directly—did not come till love had been tried full two years, and had been found still faithful, still adoring, patient, willing, courageous, hopeful. Then the shadow past away, and better times came; praise, prosperity, great fame, and rich rewards! And do you think that there was no trial then? And can you not understand that prosperity may be a very great trial to the heart that loves God, and has so often prayed never, never, even for a moment, to be allowed to forget Him? But how did James get rich? and did he get richer than Jobson? and did he stand the trial well, strong in the Christian's strength, in the armour of God?

You will soon know. James grew rich in this way. It was determined that a new school-room should be built for the poor children who lived in the village of Morland Cross; and this was chiefly because Jobson was making them come to his in-

structions in all cases where he was powerful enough to compel them, and tempting and bribing them when stronger measures could not be used.

A very good builder, and his brother, who was a timber-merchant, took the whole contract between them. Father Francis recommended James Chapman to them as an excellent workman. These tradesmen were good Catholics, both of them; and they were very glad to hear of so steady a man, for their own home was above ten miles from Morland Cross. With a brisk step and a light heart James attended their summons. He was glad about many things; glad about the new school, and about the children; glad to find that the room was to be used sometimes as a chapel; and glad that he was to work in God's cause. He saw hope and thankfulness on the faces of the priests, and he went to his work rejoicing, hearing Mass before he went, offering up his heart of hope in confiding prayer, and humbly adoring God.

in confiding prayer, and humbly adoring God.

James pleased his employers very much. They found him full of cleverness and thought. He knew something of architecture, and was very ready with his pencil; had a naturally correct eye, and was quick at calculation. He understood rapidly, and executed well; they wondered that they had never heard of him before! But James was not always what he now is. In the dull time of poverty he had read and thought, and Father Francis had directed him what to read. He had greatly improved himself. He could copy plans, and draw, and colour elevations very tidily. He was not clever at the landscapes that often surrounded his houses and churches; his oak-trees

had an inveterate habit of looking like large green cabbages grouped together, but James did not care about that; he used to laugh and say, "Well, never mind, I must stick to my trade; I shall never be asked to build a tree." You see he had had good advice, and he had had the energy to act upon it. If he had been a poor, grumbling, cast-down, sad-tempered, unchristian-like man, he would not have had the energy to act upon it. It was his religion which had brought him close to God, and made him rich in God's grace; and it had also kept alive in him that love which had made him a man of undying hope and unconquerable courage; it had invested him with a strength, an interior strength, over which not even the last trial of death can gain a victory, and which shall never leave him, unless he leaves the Church which is God's, and the Sacraments which are His power, and Himself.

He was a wiser and cleverer man than he formerly was; and he owed it to the Catholic Church. He owed it to the Church that those few flowers in his back-yard had had half-a-dozen greenhouses designed for them, and that their plans and drawings lay in his table-drawer; and he owed it to the Church that he got to be clerk of the works at Morland Cross.

Is a poor man reading this? Will he dwell a little longer upon these thoughts? Why had not James Chapman in his time of trial become idle and discontented? Because he was a Catholic. How was it that want of work had not ruined him? How was it that he had grown wiser, and better able to gain his living than he was in

former times? It was because he was a Catholic. How was it that he had not got out of spirits, and had not gone to the public-house for consolation? It was because he was a Catholic. how was it that he did not want the consolations of beer, bad company, and immoral or trashy books? How was it that the world had done its worst with him and never hurt him, but that he had grown under his trials a better man, better in all ways than he was before? It was all because he was a Catholic. This world's trials have no power over the Catholic who has given his heart to God. The Catholic takes these trials and turns them into treasures; he never loses happiness in the work; he knows that his Blessed Saviour has given him this very thing to do, and he does it with all his heart. This is just what James Chapman did. He put his heart into it, and he even grew fond of his trial, and was averse to running away from it.

Yet, want of food and want of clothes are terrible things, and they must make a man miserable! Must they? Oh no! They may make him cold and hungry, but not miserable. James Chapman was not reduced either to nakedness or starvation, so he may not teach you; but you cannot forget that you have been taught by hundreds and thousands of voices, by that noble army of martyrs which have gone up from Ireland, and who died in utter destitution,—the living lying among the dead, for they had none to bury them,—and yet were never miserable.

And if any one is very poor and very wretched, and wants to be able to suffer well and to be miserable no longer, let him pray, with a sincere heart, James Chapman's prayer, "Lord, teach me to love Thee!" And let him tell his wants to God—not the wants of food and clothes; that must be as God pleases, but—that he wants to fill his heart with the love that flows from the Heart of Jesus, and that he desires to do and to suffer whatever God wills.

But we must return to James Chapman. He got on to be clerk of the works at Morland Cross; but that was not enough to make him rich, or to load him with fame. Yet fame and riches came, and very quickly too.

As the school-room was to be used for a chapel, the inside was to receive some extra decoration. and a man who was a very good carver in stone had come from a distance to do the sculpture of the corbels, and the niche which was to contain the figure of St. Joseph, who was the patron of the school. Of course, as a Catholic, James had a great interest in ecclesiastical decoration, and he was a great admirer of this man's work. A friendship grew up between them. The sculptor was very fond of his art, and talked to James about it; he even lent him his tools when the day's work was over, and made James try to cut some simple forms himself. This workman came from a distance, and lodged in a cottage near Morland Cross. Before he had finished cutting the corbels, he caught a cold, which turned to a fever; and it was sad to see him lying, even at the point of death, so far from home. James sent for Mrs. Cary to nurse the man properly, and Father Francis attended him. He wrote to his wife, and assured her of her husband being cared for, and did as much for him as if he had been his brother.

It was in no small degree through James's kindness that the man recovered; and when he was well enough to be sent home, he said to James, "Keep my tools till I can send for them. You have a genius that way, and you have the thoughts and heart of a true Catholic. Now, mind what I say: take the tools and work out the holy and beautiful thoughts that lie within. You can cut the angels for the remaining corbels as well as I can."

James tried, and he succeeded; most wonderfully he succeeded. Again he went to Father Francis for books, and he learnt with diligence, and copied from casts, and could hardly tear himself from his new work; it was like a new-found world to him. His employers were delighted. But still James recollected the sick man's advice, "work out the thoughts that lie within." So he went on from little to greater. He was the talk of the whole country; and his fame had begun. He had finished the corbels; angels with faces of praise, and nuns of characteristic purity—there they were, cut in enduring stone from the book of his own heart. He has carved the holy water-stoup, and he has cut the niche beneath which St. Joseph is to stand. And there stands up a piece of stone like a gatepost; it is just as unshapely, though its texture is so fine; and James gazes at it, and wonders, and hopes, and determines that he will try. He has known much of the hidden mercies of God; he has led a secret life, secret from the world, and

known only to God and His priest; he has long known and honoured the spouse of the Blessed Virgin as one called to an office of unutterable dignity, and he longs to try. The saint of the hidden life will help him.

hidden life will help him.

He does try, and again he succeeds. People ask questions—"Where did he learn?" "He had had very little teaching." "How did he obtain the proportions?" "He had studied the proper proportions of the human figure." But the face, the countenance, the majestic calm, the consciousness of trust, the tender devotion, and, over all, the innocence! Where did he find these? From what could he have copied them? He cannot answer such questions. His soul answers, but not in words; it has all been no more than one act of love in honour of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, in plain words, his fortune is made. Work comes in quicker than he can do it, and he Work comes in quicker than he can do it, and he can scarcely find time for the study that has become necessary. But he finds time to think and pray, to hear Mass, to return God thanks, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, be a father to the fatherless, and a friend to the widow. And people say that he will never save any thing, and advise Sophy to tell him not to be so free with his charity. But Sophy smiles, and says that they are not afraid of poverty; and sometimes she says, "Oh, James is storing up riches in his own way."

One, two, three years pass on, and his fame

One, two, three years pass on, and his fame grows, and his riches have increased daily. He is not James Chapman, dealer in marine stores, any longer now. He has no shop, but a long room, like a gallery, occupies the space, and it is full of work, and patterns, and designs in plaster; and large outlines, drawn on paper stretched in frames, are hung against the walls. A Lady Chapel has been added to the church. And at this, James—a mason once more for the love of God—has often laboured with his own hands; and the beautiful figure of the Blessed Virgin that is placed there is his own design, his own work, and his own gift. And one thing more people show as his own doing. It is a cross of exquisite workmanship, which marks a grave of some seven years old in the Catholic burial-ground. It is where the mortal part of Nell Cary waits for the everlasting day.

A year or two more goes by, and James "may do what he likes now"—so people say. He has studied architecture, and his first work is to be a gift to God of a small church at Morland Cross. And he has satisfied the very prudent friends who are troubled at his generosity; he has insured his life, for Sophy's sake, for a thousand pounds.

He is richer than Jobson, then? I am not sure about that. Jobson has got on in the world too. He preaches, and rants, and travels about, and gets up Protestant meetings, and plagues poor women, and persecutes innocent children, and praises the rich, and compliments the powerful. He has had "a library" added to the house—alas! and Father Francis taught him to read. Soup-kitchens have been built, and they are well worked; and reformatory schools, but they do no work at all; and stables and a coach-house, for Jobson has risen to the dignity of keeping a gig. Jobson knows all about James; all about his great success, his generosity, his building the church at Morland Cross,

and the riches that come in to him. When James is spoken of among Jobson's powerful friends, he sighs, and says that he knew him once, and pretends to think of him with sorrow and pity. But it is all pretence. He knows very well that James is right. He knows that James's conduct, now that prosperity has come to him, is the conduct of a good Catholic; and he knows very well that God will give James the grace of final perseverance, if James remains true to the Church. He knows this, because he cannot help knowing it, because he was once himself a Catholic; but he tries not to think of it; he tries never to think of death and judgment; and if conscience will wake up upon these points now and then, he wonders within himself whether the prayers of such men as James Chapman will ever be of any use to such as himself? And this hard-hearted despairing wonder was

answered before long.

One evening James Chapman was returning from the new church. He was on foot; and had stopped to venerate for a moment the ancient cross which stood on the heath, at the top of the hill above the village to which it gave its name. He heard the sound of wheels and of a horse coming at an extraordinary pace. It was gathering in dusk, but yet he could see some way across the open plain. He saw the gig in which Jobson usually drove, coming on at the fearful speed of a horse half mad with fright; but Jobson he could not see. What has become of that unhappy man? "By Thy cross," exclaimed James, laying one hand upon the venerated stone, "Lord, have mercy upon him!" At the moment, a man reared himself up, clinging to the leather in front of the gig. James could now see that the reins were about the horse's feet, and that he was off the road and on the smooth turf, and keeping a course inclining towards the masses of granite which lay scattered, and sometimes thickly grouped, all over the heath. He ran towards the carriage as fast as he could go. He saw the frightened animal get among the rocks; he saw the gig bound over one and then another. He saw Jobson succeed in standing upright in the gig. He held on by the back. Another bound, and something breaks-the carriage will no longer follow the animal as it had done. The horse kicks furiously to free itself from the incumbrance, and dashes forward again with all its might, dragging the shattered wreck along with it for a little further. James is by the horse's side; he catches at the reins as he runs at his utmost speed. His presence of mind is perfect, he knows how to act; and, faithful to his God, he has not forgotten to pray. But Jobson's agony is at its height: he sees a rock in the way of the wheel, and there is a quarry on the other side. It looks like his grave, and he cries aloud, "Oh, my soul! A priest! A priest!" James hears, and has only one thought—to stop that horse at the risk of his life. He jumps at the horse's head; he is cast on the ground, he is wounded by the shaft, struck on the head by the animal's hoof, and is stretched senseless on the smooth surface of a huge rock, which lay like a flooring of stone amidst the herbage and heath. Jobson had tried to save his life by springing from the gig, and lay not ten yards distant weltering in blood. The maddened horse, with the shattered remnant of the carriage, attracted notice, and brought many people to the heath. By them James and Jobson were found: the latter was alive, but speechless; the former had the full possession of his senses, but could not move, and was only moved by others with great difficulty. He was in agonies of pain. A poor Catholic woman in the village took them in; and in an hour's time Sophy had arrived, bringing Father Francis with her. The doctor's opinion was given immediately and decisively. Jobson might live, but James Chapman would die,—he was dying then.

Among those who came from the town to hear and see, and know all particulars, was Mrs. Tatler and many of her friends. They stood and stared in the room of the still insensible Jobson, and she forced herself partly inside the half-open door of James's room. She had been told the truth—told that he was dying. "How awful," said Mrs. Tatler, "to die just as he is got up so high in the world! How awful to leave it all so soon!" But Mrs. Tatler and Mrs. Tatler's friends knew nothing about it. He has stood the trial of prosperity; the full tide of the affairs of life has brought him nearer to God -not borne him farther off from Him. done all that he has done in God, by God, and for God. He has never put his hand to any thing that could keep back the cause of Christ. He succeeded because he was a Catholic; he progressed and improved because he was a Catholic; he risked his life at a sinner's call because he was a Catholic, and no skill or care can detain him from the face of his Lord. The love of God had been as strong

in prosperity as in adversity. In all things he had overcome because of Jesus who had loved him. And now Jesus had spoken to his soul and said, "I do not want your works any more; I want your self!" Could such a servant sorrow at so sweet a summons? Could he do less than "rejoice," though it was "with trembling?" But though it was trembling, it was not fear; for love had cast fear out, and the soul trembled not in the terrors of doubt, but in the shrinkings of humility. What was there in life, even in his prosperous life, that could tempt his soul away from the gate of heaven? And now he has been to confession for the last

And now he has been to confession for the last time, and he will never hear Father Francis speak the words of absolution again. Eternity is before him, and those words are gone up to wait him there. He is going to find their truth and their power. He is going to prove the priests' commission: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them!"

And this James Chapman thinks of with all the energy of his mind. He has been anointed.

And this James Chapman thinks of with all the energy of his mind. He has been anointed. He has received his God in the Blessed Sacrament for the last time; but his whole soul rests on the thought of the forgiveness of sins. It is because of the cry that he heard Jobson utter, "Oh, my soul! A priest, a priest!" He asks anxiously about Jobson; he seems to be his only earthly thought. He gives the recollection of him to his wife, as a last legacy: "If he lives, Sophy, never forget him!" She promises never to forget Jobson. "Some Catholic ought to be in the room," he says. "Ambrose Cary is there," says Sophy. James raises his eyes to heaven: "Oh, Lord, how

good, how merciful, how full of love Thou art! thank Thee, I glorify Thee!" He seems like one overcome with joy. The recollection of Ambrose Cary's sick-bed, and of the circumstances that brought him to the Church, seem too much for his weak state; he shakes with emotion, while his countenance beams with an almost unearthly joy. Father Francis holds a blessed crucifix to his lips. He kisses the feet. "Lift me up; pray"—he says it rapidly—"Depart, O Christian soul!" Yes, the time is come. His soul went forth upon the thought of God's love, and found its infinite greatness written on the face of God the Son.

And at that very moment, as near as it could be known, the soul of Jobson went forth from the body, and knew the sentence that no one on earth can guess at. For whether it was the voice of repentance or the cry of despair that uttered those last words-words that meant so much-is among the secret things of God.

But not far off, in a lunatic asylum, there is an old woman tearing her white hair, and uttering maniac cries,—and this is Jobson's mother.

A few words about Sophy, and our story will be ended.

She is one of the happiest women in the world. Are you very much shocked, dear reader? and can you not imagine that this may very easily be? I had better repeat it. She is one of the happiest women in the world; and even Aunt Anny thinks so, and she has come all the way from America to make sure of it. Even Aunt Anny says so, and she said it before Sophy put into her hands a

cheque for five hundred pounds—half of the sum for which James had insured his life—and so she is quite a disinterested witness.

It pleased God to bestow upon Sophy one of His greatest gifts—a vocation to the religious life. She is a nun of the house of our Lady of Mercy; and to our Blessed Lady's keeping let us lovingly leave her.



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